

Leipzig University
Global and European Studies Institute

Master Thesis
Submitted for the Degree of
MA European Studies

Giving Meaning to the EU?

The Contribution of Convictional Lobbying to the
Emergence of a European Civil Religion

Author:

Miriam Meir
miriam.meir@uni-leipzig.de

Supervisors:

Prof. Dr. Gert Pickel
Institute of Practical Theology

Prof. Dr. Miriam Hartlapp
Institute of Political Science

Leipzig, 20 March 2017

Structure

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Civil Religion	4
2.1.	Civil Religion Theory	5
2.2.	European Civil Religion	7
2.3.	Civil Religious Inventories in the EU	8
3.	Convictional Lobbying in the EU	10
3.1.	Lobbying in the EU	10
3.2.	Convictional Lobbying	12
3.3.	Establishment of Convictional Lobbying in the EU	14
3.4.	Convictional Representation in the EU	16
4.	Analyses	19
4.1.	Research Question and Theoretical Assumptions	19
4.2.	Method	21
4.2.1.	Method Triangulation within a Qualitative Content Analysis Framework	21
4.2.2.	Expert Interviews	22
4.2.3.	Websites	24
4.3.	Results of the Expert Interview Analysis	26
4.3.1.	Promotion of Religious Content	26
4.3.2.	Differences among Convictional Lobbyists	28
4.3.3.	Cooperation and Conflicts among Convictional Lobbyists	30
4.3.4.	Influence of Convictional Lobbying	32
4.4.	Results of the Website Analysis	34
4.4.1.	Promoted Values	34
4.4.2.	Meaning and Purpose of the EU	37
4.4.3.	Opposition and Threat to the EU	38
4.4.4.	Vision for Europe	40
5.	Discussion	42
5.1.	Hypothesis 1: General Promotion of Religious Content	42
5.2.	Hypothesis 2: Promotion of Inconsistent Religious Content	43
5.3.	Hypothesis 3: Promotion of Consistent Religious Content	44
5.4.	Discussing the Impact of Convictional Lobbying	45
6.	Conclusion	48
7.	Literature	51
8.	Annex	55
8.1.	Expert Interview Analysis	55
8.2.	Website Analysis	68
8.2.1.	Corpus	68
8.2.2.	Analysis	70
8.3.	Expert Interviews	85
8.3.1.	Questionnaire	85
8.3.2.	Expert 1	86
8.3.3.	Expert 2	91
8.3.4.	Expert 3	94
8.3.5.	Expert 4	96

List of Abbreviations

AAII	Ahmadiyya Association for Propagation of Islam
BBI	B'nai B'rith International
BIC	Bahá'í International Community
CEC	Conference of European Churches
CFREU	Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
COMECE	Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community
CROCEU	Committee of Representatives of Orthodox Churches to the European Union
Doc	Document
E	Expert
EC	European Community
EEA	European Evangelical Alliance
EGALE	Egalité Laïcité Europe
EHF	European Humanist Federation
EJA	European Jewish Association
EJC	European Jewish Congress
EKD	Evangelical Church of Germany
EML	European Muslims League
EU	European Union
GLISRU	La Grande Loge Indépendante et Souveraine des Rites Unis
HFE	Hindu Forum of Europe
I	Interviewer
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
No	Number
P	Page
Sec	Section
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
US	United States of America
WS	Website
WEA	World Evangelical Alliance

1. Introduction

As an increasing salience of nationalist parties in Europe suggests that more and more people doubt European integration or are even willing to leave the *European Union* (EU), it is the right moment to pose an existential question: What gives meaning to the EU? One approach to explain meaning within a political community such as the EU is civil religion theory. It focuses on a basic worldview shared by all citizens, captures the values they aspire, and, ultimately, reflects the perceived mission of the political project on earth. However, to date the concept of civil religion has rarely been applied to the study of the EU (Benedikter & Göschl 2014, 112). Furthermore, in view of the young age of the EU, it is not clear whether there is a European civil religion or not. Because civil religion is a broad phenomenon and therefore difficult to be measured or formulated (Schieder 1986, 245ff.), this thesis sheds light on the structural conditions supporting its emergence. It focuses on the lobbying of religious and philosophical organizations and investigates its contribution to civil religion construction in the EU. In this way, it answers whether a European civil religion emerges or not.

The concept of civil religion originated in the Enlightenment with Rousseau's social contract (1978) and regained popularity in the 1960s, when Bellah (2005) analyzed presidential speeches in the US. He stated an American civil religion which he defined as "a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in a collectivity" (Bellah 2005, 46). View years later, the discourse about civil religion swiped over to Europe and was adjusted to European societies. Whereas the American civil religion involves direct references to God, the European discourse focuses rather on fundamental values within a society (Luhmann 2004) and religious inventories in a political system (Lübbe 2004). It is based on a functional understanding of religion capturing the cohesion within a political community. Thus, this thesis builds on the perception that civil religion exists in every society with a shared political culture. It still expands the concept of political culture relating to the overall reality of a sociopolitical order (Hilderbrandt 1996).

Applying civil religion theory to the EU rests upon different conditions than in a nation state. First, the EU is not a nation built on one ethnical community. Instead, it captures diverse cultures and religions which have been influencing each other in multiple ways. Second, the EU is not a state but a community of member states. A European civil religion would emerge

next to already existing national civil religions. To understand the complex belonging of EU citizens, research about European identity has increased rapidly (Bourne 2015, 55). Religion is often considered as an unavoidable element of discussing it (Mandry 2009, 25). However, little authors base their approaches on civil religion theory.

Of the ones who do, some deal with the question whether there is already a civil religion in the EU or not and if it is needed (Hildebrandt 2006; Kleger 2008). Others rather focus on what it could be based on (Benedikter & Göschl 2014; Nix 2012). Further research links civil religion to a specific policy area, such as religious policy in the EU (Heinig 2001) or religious education in different EU member states (Laudrup 2009). Davies (2001) discusses a global civil religion from a European perspective. Finally, there are papers dealing with related issues such as European identity (Riesebrodt 2014) or European social culture (Pickel 2006) also integrating the concept of civil religion. Still, to date there has been no research linking European civil religion to the lobbying of religious and philosophical organizations in the EU.

The European Commission considers lobbying in the EU as a legitimate part of a democratic system. It draws attention on important policy issues and hereby contributes to EU policy making (European Commission 2006, 5). Religious and philosophical organizations reflect the spiritual fundament of Europe. Therefore, in article 17 TFEU the EU recognizes their identity and specific contribution. It respects their status on a member state level and further strives to maintain an open and transparent dialog with them. Correspondingly, a wide range of religious and philosophical organizations opened a representation office in Brussels and registered to the EU institutions. The most established actors are the *Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community* (COMECE) representing Catholicism in Europe and the *Conference of European Churches* (CEC), a coalition of Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican, and Old Catholic churches. With the growing importance of religious and philosophical organizations in the Lisbon Treaty, religious lobbying in the EU has been addressed increasingly (Böllmann 2010; Houston 2014; Leustean 2013; McCrea 2013; Vlieger & Tanasescu 2012).

Because article 17 TFEU applies to religious and philosophical organizations equally and because civil religion theory captures both, religious as well as secular convictions and beliefs, this study integrates all approaches regardless of their religious or nonreligious background. The term 'convictional' suggests a particular worldview from which values and virtues can be derived. It does not specify whether it is based on the belief in a transcendental being or not. The lobbying of convictional organizations is influenced by three factors, namely its

institutional interest as an organization between other organizations, the interest of its members, and its message of origin (Könemann et al. 2015, 61). The latter point is considered here as convictional lobbying. It is characterized by the ambition to shape the civil religious fundament of a political community. Unlike usual lobbying, it does not defend the individual interest of a reference group or a referred object. Instead, it aspires to define and promote convictions and beliefs according to the ideological background of the lobbying organization. The outcome of convictional lobbying is considered here as religious content. It includes values as well as convictions and beliefs regarding the meaning and purpose of the political community, its opposition and treats, and its vision for the future.

In order to find out whether convictional lobbying in the EU does support civil religion construction, this thesis pursues the question:

Does convictional lobbying in the EU contribute to the emergence of a European civil religion?

It is answered in two steps. First, it has to be proven that convictional lobbyists in the EU promote religious content and therefore meet the requirement of convictional lobbying. If convictional organizations like other lobbying organizations solely defend the individual interest of their institutions or members, they do not contribute to the emergence of a civil religion (hypothesis 1). Second, they neither do if they promote inconsistent religious content, namely convictions and beliefs contradicting each other (hypothesis 2). Only if convictional lobbying in the EU promotes consistent religious content reflecting a minimum consensus of convictions and beliefs, it contributes to the emergence of a European civil religion (hypothesis 3). However, the repetition of fundamental values already established in the legal base of the EU is not considered as promotion of religious content. Because the EU only allows the registration of religious organizations supporting its values, it is postulated that all of them agree to them. Instead, the promotion of religious content involves new convictions and beliefs transmitted to EU policy and the concrete interpretation of the already established ones.

To answer the research question, it is necessary to consider both, the self-understanding and daily practice of convictional organizations lobbying to the EU, and the content they promote. The former can only be retrieved through expert interviews with convictional lobbyists. They can provide information about priorities in their lobbying activities and the differences between convictional organizations in the EU. Furthermore, they can reflect cooperation preferences and

conflict lines between convictional lobbyists. This type of insight cannot be gained through other sources, such as the official websites of convictional lobbying organizations. On such platforms, they address their followers and members to inform them about the EU, its political debates and the policy ambitions of the organization. It is unlikely that conflict lines in particular are expressed there. Still, the websites form a proper base to analyze and compare the content promoted by the convictional lobbying organizations. This information would exceed the limited time of expert interviews. Therefore, to achieve a comprehensive answer to the research question, this study relies on a method triangulation within a qualitative content analysis framework inspired by the approach of Mayring (2015). The triangulation combines an expert interview analysis with an analysis of the websites of convictional lobbying organizations. The results give insight into the content promoted by convictional lobbyists and its consistency.

The theoretical part of this thesis focuses on civil religion and convictional lobbying in the EU. The second chapter introduces to civil religion theory in its creation contexts. It compares the American concept to the European discourse and presents approaches to a European civil religion and civil religious inventories in the EU's legal base. Chapter three reflects convictional lobbying in the EU. It carves out the importance of lobbying in EU policy making and discusses the particularity of convictional lobbying. Against this background, it outlines the establishment and the scope of convictional organizations lobbying on the EU level. The empirical part of the thesis in chapter four captures the theoretical assumptions and the methodical procedure. On this base, it presents the results of both, the expert interview analysis and the website analysis. Chapter five applies the results to the theoretical assumptions and discusses the impact of convictional lobbying in the EU. Finally, chapter six summarizes the outcomes, draws a conclusion in regard to the research question and the method applied, and gives an outlook for future studies.

2. Civil Religion

This thesis is based on civil religion theory introduced in chapter 2.1. Within the studies of the EU this concept has not been applied often (Benedikter & Göschl 2014, 112). Chapter 2.2. provides an overview of approaches to European civil religion and presents civil religious inventories already established in the EU's legal base.

2.1. Civil Religion Theory

The term civil religion was first introduced by Rousseau. He based the idea of a social contract on the concept of civil religion to object the influential Catholicism at that time (Rousseau 1978, 155-164). For this reason, Rousseau proposes an obligatory citizen Creed based on a limited amount of simple and precise formulated doctrines involving the existence of an all-powerful and wise God, a future live including the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice, the holiness of the social contract, intolerance towards perpetrators and, finally, tolerance towards all kinds of religions and cults which do not contradict the obligations and duties of a citizen (Rousseau 1978, 164).

In the 1960s, Bellah revived civil religion theory analyzing presidential speeches in the US (Bellah 2005). Unlike Rousseau, he does not understand the concept as a fixed set of doctrines determined by an authority and obligatory for all citizens. Rather he observes certain religious convictions, which the great majority of the Americans share and which seem to play a crucial role in the development of political institutions (Bellah 2005, 42). He defines the term civil religion as “a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in a collectivity” (Bellah 2005, 46). In the case of America, it involves a reference to God assuming that nearly all Americans agree on a divine existence: “From left to right and regardless of church or sect, all could accept the idea of God” (Bellah 1998, 52). Furthermore, civil religion in the US includes certain convictions such as the independence of peoples, fundamental and inalienable rights of humans, a Supreme Judge of the world, and the divine providence (Bellah 1998, 44). Bellah argues that a republic needs this spiritual dimension in order to reproduce republican customs and citizens (Bellah 2005, 196).

The revival of civil religion attracted a lot of attention, not only in America but also abroad. View years after Bellah’s first Essay was published, the concept spilled over to Europe. However, the conditions there affecting the religious landscape are characterized by different circumstances such as a growing secularization and a historically motivated suspicion against religion entering the field of politics due to religious wars (Kleger & Müller 2004, 15). On this basis, Böckenförde raises the question from what the modern state is living if the binding power of religion is not essential anymore. He concludes that the secular state depends on conditions it is not able to guaranty (Böckenförde 1976, 60).

Against this background, Luhmann notes the integrative function of fundamental values which

he considers as civil religion (Luhmann 2004). It is composed by both, constitutional values as well as less formalized common convictions about for example justice, fairness, equality, or even live quality (Luhmann 2004, 175). While traditional religions once represented the whole population, they evolved more and more to a subsystem integrated into a society primarily differentiated by functional areas. Today, civil religion unlike traditional religions relates to the whole of society (Luhmann 2004, 187). It reflects a consensus underlying the communication of all citizens regardless of their religious or confessional belonging.

While Luhmann deduces the concept of civil religion theoretically from the development of European societies, Lübke derives it from the American discourse calling it a 'reimportation' (Lübke 2014, 365f.). He defines civil religion as the inventories of religious culture integrated in the political system (Lübke 2004, 196). It appears within both, the religious manifestations in the legal system and the religious content of public statements of the rulers. In this context, public religiosity is not a competence of religious communities anymore. Instead, the state itself claims to be religious (Lübke 2004, 200).

Whereas the American civil religion includes references to God, the European inventories of religious content are subtler (Lübke 2014, 369). Most of the European representatives for instance avoid direct religious practices in public like praying, using the Bible or sending blessings (Lübke 2014, 379). Hence, criticism against the concept focuses on the religious character of civil religion, its adaptability to other countries than the US, its validity although there are different religious convictions within a society, and the inconsistent use of the term (Pickel 2011, 260f.). The theological discourse further sheds light on critical issues such as blind justifications of ideologies (Moltmann 1984, 72), regression into religious intolerance (Pannenberg 1985, 70), and the idolatry of the nation (Richardson 1974, 164). Nevertheless, moral concerns against civil religion theory might be caused by an equalization with the concept of political religion. Moltmann for instance considers civil religion as political religion revived with scientific naivety (Moltmann 1984, 71).

The concept of political religion needs to be carved out separately in order to define more precisely what civil religion is. A political religion is not derived from traditions but describes a transformed religion aiming the homogenization of people according to the convictions of an elite (Nix 2006, 231). Whereas the idea of civil religion was from its early beginning based on tolerance and diversity, political religion builds on the total devotion to the collective and the leading ideology (Kleger & Müller 2004, 6f.).

Within this study, civil religion is regarded as a phenomenon apparent in every political community with a political culture. Political culture refers to the links between culture – the values and virtues within a society – and structure – the institutional conditions of a political community (Pickel & Pickel 2006, 49). Its research focuses on the attitudes of individuals towards the political system and gains results about its stability. Civil religion expands the concept of political culture relating to an overall reality of a sociopolitical order (Hilderbrandt 1996, 89). It introduces a religious and transcendental dimension to the political culture that contains a metaphysical finality. Like this, it ultimately gives meaning to the political project. Whereas the substantial aspect of political culture refers to the institutional structure of a political community, civil religion strives to capture the fundament of a society and focuses on transcendence, the construction of reality, and truth (Hilderbrandt 1996, 118f.).

Schieder summarizes three approaches in civil religion research. First, it focuses on the content of civil religion expressed publicly. Second, it investigates the factors influencing its strength and finally, it could analyze the structural conditions supporting its emergence (Schieder 1986, 245ff.). While the first approaches intent to formulate and measure civil religion the latter one focuses on the circumstances favoring its construction. This is especially auspicious for a state community like the EU where it is not clear yet whether there is a political culture, a common sense of belonging, and cohesion in the society already or not.

2.2. European Civil Religion

The discourse about a European civil religion focuses mainly on its existence and its necessity next to national civil religions. This chapter informs about approaches to the phenomenon and introduces to the civil religious inventories established in the legal base of the EU.

Hildebrandt (2006) and Kleger (2008) pose the question whether there is a civil religion in the EU and if it is needed. Against this background, Hildebrandt determines civil religion in Europe as the search for driving and motivating forces in the European integration process and the feeling of belonging among Europeans (Hildebrandt 2006, 430). He concludes that the EU has no civil religion yet but needs on the long term an equivalent to enhance legitimacy (Hildebrandt 2006, 447). Also, Kleger comes to a rather sobering outcome. He recommends understanding the EU rather as a legal community than a community of values due to very different understandings of values among cultures (Kleger 2008, 32). Still, he recognizes a fundament for a European civil religion (Kleger 2008, 46f.).

Other authors investigate the existence of civil religion in the EU or its emergence focusing on a particular policy field. Heinig analyzes the civil religious character of religious policy in the EU and notes the special estimation of freedom of religion and equality of all kinds of ideologies (Heinig 2001, 107). Laudrup discusses the influence of religious education on EU citizenship in different member states. She concludes that it can provoke both, the emergence of a European civil religion based on religious diversity as well as the strengthening of national identities and the devaluation of everything alien (Laudrup 2009). Davie (2001) looks at global civil religion from a European perspective. She concludes that Europe earlier exporting Christianity is now exporting secularization to the world.

Benedikter and Göschl (2014) and Nix (2012) discuss the potential of civil religion to strengthen cohesion in the EU. Though, their ideas of what a European civil religion should be based on differ drastically. Whereas Nix argues that Christianity is the core idea of European culture and should be recognized officially (Nix 2012, 340ff.), Benedikter and Göschl imagine a civil religion rather based on a secular and humanist spirit (Benedikter & Göschl 2014, 108).

Further authors include civil religion theory into their approaches but focus on slightly different questions. Pickel for instance pursues the question about a European social culture. In this context, he notes that civil religion in Europe is based on adopted values such as justice, fairness and humanity (Pickel 2006). Riesebroth while searching for a European identity based on religion states that Europe already has a future oriented civil religious identity. However, he adds that problems in the EU cannot be solved through a reinforcement of religions (Riesebrodt 2014, 82f.). Finally, there are many authors dealing with European identity based on religion or the interplay between religion and EU policy without referring directly to civil religion theory. Here, religion is often considered as an unavoidable issue discussing European identity (Mandry 2009, 25).

2.3. Civil Religious Inventories in the EU

One way to specify a European civil religion is to focus on religious inventories in the EU's legal system. This chapter presents symbols, beliefs, and rituals that are manifested in the treaties and considered as crucial for the EU.

Meaningful symbols in the EU involve above all the European flag and the anthem. Moreover, there are practical ones such as the Euro, the EU Passport, and unitary number plates on cars (Hildebrandt 2006, 446). Rituals connected to the EU capture the elections to the European

Parliament but also European national holidays, and the election to the European capital of cultures (Mandry 2009, 16). Collective beliefs are located in the legal base of the EU. The preambles of the Lisbon Treaty and the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* (CFREU) give insight into values the EU is based on.

The preamble of the Lisbon Treaty states:

“DRAWING INSPIRATION from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law.” (TEU, preamble)

It mentions both, the religious and the humanist heritage without committing to a specific religion like for instance Christianity. The avoidance of a reference to God is a result of the negotiations about the failed Constitutional Treaty. The claim of some religious nations and lobbies encountered resistance among secular organized member states (McCrea 2013, 218). McCrea notes that the formulation today can still cause opposition among humanists preferring the strict separation between religion and policy (McCrea 2013, 218).

The CFREU formulates it slightly different:

“Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice.” (CFREU, preamble)

It does not refer anymore to a religious background although it commits to a common spiritual and moral heritage. It further lists the fundamental values the EU is based on and which are considered as universal. Comparable information can be found in article 2 TEU. Riesebroth describes these values as a sacred element confirming a European civil religion (Riesebroth 2014, 83).

Besides religious references and fundamental values, the EU constitutes its meaning within a historical context. The preamble of the Lisbon Treaty further states: “RECALLING the historic importance of the ending of the division of the European continent and the need to create firm bases for the construction of the future Europe” (TEU, preamble). Here, the EU represents a solution for separation and conflicts in Europe. Kleger states that the EU embeds itself on an historical path of responsibility striving ultimately for peace (Kleger 2008, 24). Still, the European integration process remains an open finality: “The peoples of Europe, in creating an ever closer union among them, are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values” (CFREU, preamble). Besides the aspiration of peace, it does not give any

insight in how the future union should look like. It reveals an uncertainty of the European project solely pointing out a direction: the rapprochement of European people.

3. Convictional Lobbying in the EU

Convictional lobbying in the EU summarizes the advocacy work for the common good of religious and philosophical organizations. To approach the phenomenon, the importance of lobbying in the EU is outlined in chapter 3.1. In chapter 3.2. the particularity about convictional lobbying is discussed. On this base, chapter 3.3. introduces to the history of convictional lobbying in the EU and chapter 3.4. presents the scope of convictional lobbying organizations on the EU level building on the religious landscape in Europe.

3.1. Lobbying in the EU

Definitions of lobbying are diverse. Still, all of them have in common to deal with the communication of interest in politics (Joos 2011, 20f.). The European Commission defines lobbying in a green paper on the European Transparency Initiative as “all activities carried out with the objective of influencing the policy formulation and decision-making processes of the European institutions” (European Commission 2006, 5). Accordingly, lobbyists are “persons carrying out such activities“ (European Commission 2006, 5).

The interest motivating lobbyists to influence EU policy is not illuminated in this definition. Usually, it refers to a particular reference group having objectively or subjectively perceived a common interest which is articulated autonomously (Abromeit 1989, 246). Joos argues that lobbyist’s interest is always individual (Joos 2011, 22). Moreover, individual interest is egoist (Abromeit 1989, 246; van Schendelen 2006, 133). It strives to gain advantages and privileges for the represented reference group or the referred object.

Beyond defining what is lobbying, the Commission identifies it as a legitimate part of a democratic system. Furthermore, lobbyist can help to bring important issues on the agenda and hereby contribute to an effective policy making (European Commission 2006, 5). This understanding is based on the notion that lobbying is embedded into a comprehensive strategy of communication between political and economic or civic actors. Therefore, it is unavoidable for the functioning of a political system. In formulating and enforcing political measures, the democratic authority depends on the cooperation with decisive economic and civic groups

(Kleinfeld et al. 2007, 3).

Although there is a need for lobbying in order to take into account all relevant interest, lobbying is traditionally in the focus of critique (Kleinfeld et al. 2007, 8). Leif and Speth argue that with a growing importance of lobbying, organized groups determine the political agenda while public interest has second priority. Lobbying thus developed to a fifth force in a political system (Leif & Speth 2006, 30f.). Other criticism refers to the fact that lobbying is not based on the principal of equality but on the principal of freedom (Kleinfeld et al. 2007, 13). The membership of an interest group is voluntary. While some actors articulate their interest in multiple forms, others for various reasons, do not defend them. Additionally, the influence of lobbying groups depends on different factors, such as money, size, mobilization capacity, conflict ability, as well as institutional opportunities (Kleinfeld et al. 2007, 13). Therefore, the interest of strong economic or civic actors with adequate financial recourses might be more powerful than the interest of weaker ones.

Regarding lobbying in the EU, van Shendelen summarizes three major points of criticism being discussed: the advantage of multinational cooperations in comparison to weaker groups in the society such as workers, consumers, and small enterprises, a lack of transparency, and the use of abusive immoral practices like corruption to influence policy decisions (van Shendelen 2013, 325). Apart from that, he states that although few lobbying organizations could threaten a democracy, the existence of many in concurrence to each other is strengthening it (van Shendelen 2006, 158). To counter criticism and to provide more transparency in the EU, the Commission induced a transparency register that lists lobbyists including their financial recourses and visits to the EU institutions. Since its introduction, the number of lobbyists regularly increases and amounted more than ten thousand by the end of 2016 (European Commission 2017a). However, the participation is still on a voluntary base. A proposal for a mandatory agreement to register is passing legislative procedure (European Commission 2016).

In sum, the EU emphasizes the need for lobbying in European policy making. Without the representation of organized interest, it would not be able to face the complex and diverse interplay of actors and social groups. To gain a fair and representative overview of interest it strives to organize lobbying as open as possible. However, criticism still condemns the disadvantage of less organized social interest.

3.2. Convictional Lobbying

To carve out the particularity of convictional lobbying, it is important to outline the special character of convictional organizations and the differences among them. This chapter introduces to the advocacy of religious organizations and compares them to other convictional lobbying groups not considering themselves religious. Finally, it sums up the differences of convictional to usual lobbying and defines religious content promoted by convictional organizations.

There are various convictional organizations promoting their worldviews and ideologies. Nevertheless, they differ in terms of salience and organizational degree. Even the organization of solely religious communities is diverse depending on the religion or denomination. Most of them have a dual structure: On the one hand, the laity shapes the community life. On the other hand, the clergy manages the institution, interprets the religious doctrine, and decides about relevant questions (Abromeit 1989, 248f.).

The members of a religious community in the vast majority did not decide to join the group but were born into it. Therefore, many religious organizations do not depend on the need to motivate and convince people. Although there also exists the opportunity to leave the group, it is prevented by indoctrination (Abromeit 1989). This is not only distributed within the religious community. Because of the integration of churches into the welfare and educational systems of many European states, they can communicate their messages to a wide-ranging spectrum of society. This, however, does not count for religious minorities.

There has been little research made focusing on the organization and advocacy work of convictional organizations considering themselves as nonreligious. Still, non-religion is a part of social life and does comparable to religion structure networks of relations (Lee 2015, 106ff.). Kettell (2014) investigates the organization of atheist movements in the US. Unlike a fixed community within a church, they can be captured rather with Social Movement Theory. Thus, they are informal networks with shared beliefs comparable to peace, environment, or feminist movements (Kettell 2014, 378). On the contrary to churches, there is no formal leadership or tangible set of governing arrangements (Kettell 2014, 379).

Besides their organizational characters, nonreligious and religious organizations differ regarding their ideologies. Religious doctrine is based on a transcendental belief and the promise of salvation. Therefore, the purpose of origin of religious institutions does not primarily

refer to interest in a state or even in this world but aspires the salvation in the beyond (Albromeit 1989, 248f.). The final recipient of religious activities usually is God and the referred object the world. Religious ambitions thus do not concern the privileges of a particular reference group. Instead, religious organizations see themselves as the visible part of an invisible community with a focus on the whole humanity (Böllmann 2010, 69f.).

Könemann et al. note three factors which a representation of religious interest needs to balance. It must defend its institutional interest as an organization between other organizations, integrate the interest of its members, and promote its message of origin (Könemann et al. 2015, 61). Albromeit considers the interest of its members as irrelevant due to little democratic elements and the reliability of social support. Instead, the secular interest of religious organizations is only referring to the institution itself and the preservation of its ideology. Outwards it aims to gain material privileges and inwards it strives to maintain the pure religious doctrine among its members (Albromeit 1989, 249). Grzymała-Busse sees the main political goal of religious institutions in obtaining moral authority in sensible issues like for instance abortion or same sex marriage (Grzymała-Busse 2015). Overall, all authors identify a political ambition of religious organizations to promote and protect their worldviews.

Convictional organizations considering themselves as nonreligious do not refer to a transcendental God or the salvation in the beyond. Still, they reflect a worldview from which they derive concrete values and ideas of morality. Their ambitions are not limited to a particular reference group but considered as universal. Cimino and Smith (2007) come to the conclusion that secular humanist and atheist organizations in the US pursue comparable goals and strategies like religious minorities. They strive to attract secular seekers, take up a minority discourse, and hereby borrow elements from their main antagonists: Evangelical Protestants (Cimino & Smith 2007, 411).

Both, religious and nonreligious convictional organizations base their ambitions on concrete worldviews. Their ideological claims are universal and do not refer to the interest of any particular group. They seem to not fit the common definitions of lobbying driven by individual and egoist interest. Still, Joos argues that although there are lobbying groups claiming to defend interest of the common good, this interest still might be in concurrence with other interest and can be also called individual interest (Joos 2011, 22). As an example, he refers to NGOs focusing on environmental protection. Even though everybody benefits from a healthy environment, the interest of environmental protection might be conflicting with the interest of

industrial firms and the protection of jobs considered also as the common good. Therefore, it is individual.

However, this argument does not apply to convictional lobbying. Whereas organizations striving for one single goal – considered as the common good like for instance environmental protection – are driven by concrete values, convictional organizations primarily strive to implement exactly these kinds of values because they consider them as righteous. In this way, they do not solely influence the policy making but shape the ideological fundament of the whole political system. They integrate it into a transcendental framework and provide it with a purpose and a moral. Thus, they give meaning to the political community and construct civil religion.

Within this study, the active promotion of worldviews and values is considered as religious content. It reflects the main difference between convictional and usual lobbying, even though convictional organizations do not exclusively promote religious content but also have institutional interest.

3.3. Establishment of Convictional Lobbying in the EU

Convictional organizations and in particular churches tried to participate in the European integration process already from the 1970s onwards (Vlieger & Tanasescu 2012, 452). Two groups turned out to be the major voice of the great part of Europe's religious communities: COMECE representing Catholicism in Europe and CEC, a coalition of Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican, and Old Catholic churches. The interactions expanded and since the 1980s, the Commission started to have regularly informal meetings with them (Vlieger & Tanasescu 2012, 453).

The breakthrough of convictional lobbying in the EU was marked in the early 1990s triggered by a strategy of the former president of the Commission Jacques Delors. On November 5, 1990, he invited European church leaders to a meeting on the national identity and belonging to the *European Community* (EC) (Leustean 2013, 1). He stated that the EC was based on two motors: the striving for reconciliation according to the motto 'Never Again' and the refusal to accept economic and political decline. However, it was lacking a 'heart and a soul'. On this base, he stressed out the need for an intensified dialogue with religious and philosophical organizations (Leustean 2013, 1). In a later meeting in 1992, Delors further emphasized the urgency of such interactions warning that "if in the next ten years we haven't managed to give a soul to Europe, to give it spirituality and meaning, the game will be up" (Delors quoted by Hogebrink 2015,

16). Hildebrandt interprets this step as the conscious intention to promote a European civil religion (Hildebrandt 2006, 445).

Within the following years, various convictional actors were invited to discuss European issues. The two largest groups, COMECE and CEC, pursued two major goals. On the one hand, they promoted subsidiarity in religious affairs to maintain legislation concerning religious matters on a national level. On the other hand, they strived to establish an institutionalized dialogue with the EU (Vlieger & Tanasescu 2012, 455). Since 2002, they achieved to meet with the Commission twice a year on an informal level. In this time and with a growing importance of lobbying in the EU, convictional lobbyists adapted usual lobbying strategies including professionalization, specialization, and cooperation (Böllmann 2010, 80). Although COMECE and CEC still had a leading role, other religious and philosophical actors started to participate more actively (Houston 2014, 161). With the intensification of the dialogue, an increasing number of religious communities opened a representation office in Brussels. The represented convictional orientations got more and more diverse (Leustean 2013, 9).

The 2000s have been shaped by the negotiations about the Constitutional Treaty for the EU. Like the whole treaty, religious lobbying failed to defend a reference to God in the preamble. Still, the lobbying efforts of COMECE and CEC scored a major success with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 (Madeley 2013, 47; Vlieger & Tanasescu 2012, 456). Since then, the EU provides a legal base for an institutionalized dialogue with convictional organization determined in article 17 TFEU:

- “1. The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States.
2. The Union equally respects the status under national law of philosophical and non-confessional organisations.
3. Recognising their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organisations.” (art. 17 TFEU)

Besides the institutionalization of the dialog, convictional lobbyists succeeded to maintain subsidiarity concerning religious affairs. Furthermore, a particular character of convictional organizations was highlighted, strengthening them in comparison to other actors of civil society.

The following dialogue focused on a diverse range of topics including climate change, migration, EU enlargement, terrorism, and financial reforms (Leustean 2013, 23). The two focal points stressed by both, the EU institutions as well as convictional organizations were shared values and the promotion of tolerance and diversity (Houston 2014, 155f.).

However, not all organizations felled to be taken into account equally. Secular organizations like the *European Humanist Federation* (EHF) criticized the official dialogue and condemned a preferred focus on a core of organizations representing Christianity (Houston 2014, 149f.). Pollock, former president of the EHF, states that “Article 17 is contrary to general EU principals and then, with an examination of history and current practice, that this is a matter for serious concern” (Pollock 2013, 123). He argues that it privileges religion and discriminates indirectly nonreligious belief (Pollock 2013, 124). With regard to sensible issues like conception and gay relationships, he notes that the biased lobbying of religious organizations does not reflect the opinion of the majority of EU citizens (Pollock 2013, 129).

Referring to the philosophical organization’s right of equal treatment, the EHF complained based on article 17(2) TFEU to the Ombudsman who issued a decision against the Commission. As a result, other religious organizations like the Hindu and Shiks got integrated into the formal dialog. Nonreligious convictional organizations still had to meet separately with the European institutions. Houston argues that with the institutionalization of the dialog between the EU and religious organizations, Christian churches secured privileges, while philosophical organizations got disadvantaged (Houston 2014).

3.4. Convictional Representation in the EU

To give an overview of convictional representation in the EU it is necessary to first look at the religious landscape shaping the continent. This chapter provides an insight into data describing the religious belonging of Europeans. It further distinguishes different types of convictional lobbying organizations registered to the EU and finally introduces to the most established ones.

European history is strongly shaped by religion. Christianity in particular influenced the continent over centuries. Nevertheless, the religious landscape was marked by many changes and till today, there is no evidence for religious unity among Europeans. First, Christianity is divided into mainly three denominations: Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy. Second, Europe never has been purely Christian. Other religions such as the Islam and Judaism contributed to the cultural development of the continent (Davies 2006, 203ff.). This is of particular relevance in times of a growing migration to the EU. A societal pluralization is emerging and more and more religions become part of European culture (Berezenska et al. 2014, 23; Mandry 2009, 11). Third, among others the growing individualism in the Renaissance, the philosophical priorities of the Enlightenment, and the Scientific Revolution

lead to nonreligious movements also defining Europeans (Davies 2006, 12f.).

Today, the religious landscape in the EU is characterized by a broad diversity of religious belonging. There are religious and denominational differences among Europeans as well as differences regarding the religiosity of the citizens. Diverse research has been made to capture Europe's religious landscape. However, empirical data about religious belonging in Europe must be considered with caution. Liedhegener and Odermatt note contradicting results of various surveys caused by mistakes, different research categories, or biased evaluation of the data (Liedhegener & Odermatt 2014).

One approach capturing data concerning cultural belonging among Europeans including religion is the Eurobarometer established by the EU. With the intention to investigate discrimination in the EU, it asked in 2012 about the religious belonging of EU citizens. Thus, the religious landscape in Europe covered 72% of Christians. 48% of them have been Catholic, 12% Protestant, 8% Orthodox, and 4% Christians of other confessions. 23% of the asked EU citizens considered themselves nonreligious, either as agnostics (16%) or as atheists (7%). 5% belonged to other religions (European Commission 2012, 233). Difficulties in measurement are also faced regarding religious convictions. According to another Eurobarometer on biotechnology in 2010, 51% of Europeans believe in God, 26% in a transcendental spirit or live force, and 20% do not believe in none of it (European Commission 2010, 204). As the data reveals, there is no complete consistency between people belonging to religions and people believing in God. It appears that in Europe phenomena like believing without belonging and belonging without believing exist (Davie 1994). This must be taken into account focusing on convictional lobbying in the EU.

Organizations representing churches and religious communities are among others an official subsection in the EU transparency register. The number of lobbying groups registered to the EU varies regularly. By the end of 2016, 48 of around ten thousand organizations have been representations of religions and denominations (European Commission 2017a). The registration is subjected to conditions. The Commission accepts only religious groups which tolerate and respect other religions and convictions and which agree on the secularity of EU institutions (McCrea 2013, 217).

Leustean distinguishes five types of religious representations in the EU (Leustean 2013, 18ff.). Most common is the official representation of churches, like for instance Orthodox churches or

the *Evangelical Church of Germany* (EKD). Only the Roman Catholic Church is represented additionally on a diplomatic level. Furthermore, there are inter-church organizations or networks like the CEC or the *European Evangelical Alliance* (EEA). Religious orders are also represented separately such as the Jesuits. Finally, single-issue organizations are focusing on a particular topic like education or humanitarian aid. The latter two organizations maintain close relations to the main church representations (Leustean 2013, 18ff.). Nonreligious convictional organizations are usually registered as NGOs.

The Catholic Church is represented with the largest number of bodies in contact with EU institutions. One reason is that it commands a variety of single-issue organizations (Leustean 2013, 20). Vlieger and Tanasescu argue that due to the central organization of the Roman Catholic Church, Catholic organizations can easily take a stand towards political issues. On the contrary, CEC combines many heterogeneous churches and denominations which complicates decision making (Vlieger & Tanasescu 2012, 453). Because of difficulties in finding a consensus within CEC, some inter-church networks dissociated from it. An example is the EEA, an association of Evangelicals in Europe closely connected to the *World Evangelical Alliance* (WEA). Moreover, Orthodox churches tended to have more conservative opinions and therefore founded the *Committee of Representatives of Orthodox Churches to the European Union* (CROCEU) in addition to their membership in CEC (Vlieger & Tanasescu 2012, 435). Other Christian representatives have never been part of COMECE or CEC. An example are the Mormons within the *European Union Office of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*.

Beside Christian organizations, Jews are represented mainly by the *European Jewish Congress* (EJC) and the *European Jewish Association* (EJA), Hindu by the *Hindu Forum of Europe* (HFE), and Muslims at times by the *European Muslims League* (EML) or the *Ahmadiyya Association for Propagation of Islam* (AAII). However, Islamic organizations have had difficulties in mobilizing a coherent voice on a European level (Houston 2014, 166). Further religious representatives are amongst others the *B'nai B'rith International* (BBI) and the *Bahá'í International Community* (BIC). Main philosophical actors are for instance the EHF, *Egalité Laïcité Europe* (EGALE), or freemasons like *La Grande Loge Indépendante et Souveraine des Rites Unis* (GLISRU).

While the number of organizations representing religions increases steadily, the number of nonreligious convictional organizations with an office in Brussels stayed on a low level (Leustean 2013, 18). This might be explainable by the focus of the Commission on a core of

main religious actors. Another reason could be the lack of organization among agnostics and atheists in Europe.

4. Analyses

This thesis applies civil religion theory to the EU and examines the particular contribution of convictional lobbying. For this purpose, chapter 4.1. clarifies the research question and explains the theoretical assumptions including three hypotheses. The method applied, a qualitative content analysis, is presented in chapter 4.2. On this base, the results of the expert interview analysis are portrayed in chapter 4.3. and the ones of the website analysis in chapter 4.4.

4.1. Research Question and Theoretical Assumptions

One approach to European civil religion is to investigate the structural conditions necessary for its emergence. This study focuses on convictional lobbying in the EU and is guided by the question:

Does convictional lobbying in the EU contribute to the emergence of a European civil religion?

A positive answer would assume that convictional organizations promote religious content and not solely institutional interest, and this content further includes consistent convictions and beliefs. Therefore, the question can be divided into two sub questions:

1. Do convictional lobbyists promote religious content in EU politics?
2. Is this religious content consistent?

In comparison to usual lobbying, convictional lobbying strives to implement a certain set of convictions and beliefs derived from ideologies and defined here as religious content. Besides the values promoted by the organizations, it also includes how they evaluate the political community and embed it into their worldviews. Their interpretation of the EU's role on earth is unavoidable to understand which beliefs they have regarding the EU. It involves the meaning and purpose of the EU, its opposition and threat as well as a future vision about the project.

Still, convictional organizations exist among many actors in civil society and follow also an institutional interest. It is possible that on the EU level they are mainly engaged into their own

legal matters concerning the institution or the need of their followers and members. In this case, they do not differ from usual lobbyists representing companies or NGOs.

Hypothesis 1: Convictional organizations do not promote religious content in the EU.

Whether convictional lobbyists promote religious content or not depends on their self-understanding and the reflection about their daily activities. This knowledge can only be acquired by expert interviews. If convictional lobbying does not promote religious content in the EU, it does not affect the emergence of a European civil religion. Still, it is possible that some convictional lobbyists promote religious content while others focus rather on institutional interest. In this case, only convictional lobbyists promoting religious content are relevant for the further question.

Chapter two reveals that civil religion consists out of a consensus of convictions and beliefs shared in a political community. Convictional lobbyists reflect and affect the beliefs and ideas of morality in a society. If different convictional lobbyists indeed promote religious content but disagree on basic convictions or beliefs, it is hardly possible that they support civil religion in the EU.

Hypothesis 2: Convictional lobbying promotes inconsistent religious content in the EU.

Only if convictional lobbying in the EU promotes consistent religious content it can contribute to the emergence of a European civil religion.

Hypothesis 3: Convictional lobbying promotes consistent religious content in the EU.

It is also possible that convictional organizations in the EU share some convictions while they disagree on others. Civil religion is defined here as a minimum consensus. Hypothesis three is valid as soon as there are certain convictions shared and promoted by several convictional organizations and not contested by anybody. Hence, it is possible that both, hypothesis two and hypothesis three are confirmed and the answer to the research question would be still positive.

It must be taken into account that only convictional organizations with a friendly attitude towards the basic values of the EU are approved for lobbying to European institutions. It is therefore postulated that all of them agree on the civil religious fundament in the Lisbon Treaty.¹ A consistency concerning values reflected already in the legal base of the EU does solely show that convictional lobbyists already share a basic consensus but it does not prove that they

¹ The civil religious inventories in the legal base of the EU are presented in chapter 2.3.

actively promote further religious content. Thus, the third hypothesis only relates to content beyond the values determined in the legal base of the EU.

Furthermore, to answer the research question comprehensively, particular circumstances stated in the previous chapters must be considered. Like outlined in chapter 3.1., lobbying in the EU is considered as constructive for policy making only if there is a wide range of diverse organizations representing different interest of EU citizens. In the case of convictional lobbying this aspect addresses all worldviews and ideologies shared among Europeans and which are open-minded and tolerant. The religious landscape in Europe shows that there are many religions and philosophies represented to the European institutions. However, secondary literature indicates that Islam is little organized on the EU level and convictional nonreligious organizations complain to be treated differently.

4.2. Method

Investigating convictions and beliefs promoted by convictional lobbying in the EU suggests a qualitative approach. Moreover, the analyses are based on a method triangulation. It combines an expert interview analysis with a website analysis explained in this chapter.

4.2.1. Method Triangulation within a Qualitative Content Analysis Framework

Method triangulations are required when the usage of different methodical accesses systematically enlarges the acquisition of knowledge (Flick 2011, 49). Hereby, it enlightens the object of research from different perspectives, operates on different levels, or introduces a new dimension to the issue (Flick 2011, 49). The qualitative content analyzes of this study are based on both, expert interviews with convictional lobbyists and the content of official websites of convictional organizations represented to the EU.

The expert interviews give insight into the self-understanding of convictional lobbyists and their cooperation on the EU level. They can reveal commonalities as well as differences or conflicts between them and inform about the priorities of convictional lobbying in the EU. However, expert interviews cannot give a representative overview of the views of a wide range of convictional lobbying organizations. Furthermore, because of a limited time of the conversations, they are not suitable to investigate the variety of convictions and beliefs promoted by one organization. Therefore, the expert interview analysis is supplemented by a content analysis of the websites of a representative number of convictional lobbying groups representing different religions, denominations, and philosophies. This analysis addresses

especially the second sub question about the consistency of religious content.

The qualitative content analyses are inspired by the theoretical approach of Mayring (2015). According to him, a content analysis is characterized by a systematic procedure and focuses on different aspects of a fixed communication embedded into the context of origin (Mayring 2015, 11ff.). It is based on rules and derived from theory which makes it intersubjectively verifiable (Mayring 2015, 61). The codes for selecting and summarizing the relevant content are created inductively and derived from the material itself. In this way, the research is object oriented and does prevent bias of the researcher (Mayring 2015, 81ff.).

4.2.2. Expert Interviews

Expert interviews are a method specialized on the acquisition of data based on the insider knowledge of experts (Meuser & Nagel 2009, 470). Consequently, an expert is a person who gained an advanced knowledge due to a privileged access to information because of his or her function or position in a society (Meuser & Nagel 2009, 471f.). Expert interviews are often the only way to receive a particular information necessary for the reconstruction of concrete policy procedures. To strive an objective insight, it is important to choose experts with an ideological balance (Pickel & Pickel 2009, 457).

In order to achieve the maximum knowledge of the experts, Meuser and Nagel recommend a semi-structured interview (Meuser & Nagel 2009, 477). It is based on a set of questions but still open for additional information provided by the expert. There is no fixed order of the questions but a list of thematic blocks which must be covered during the interview. The structure of the questionnaire begins with rather general aspects getting more and more specific (Kaiser 2014, 53; Pickel & Sammet 2014, 70). The end of the interview is marked by questions aiming an evaluation or the theorization of the investigated phenomenon (Pickel & Sammet 2014, 70).

The interviews underlying this analysis are conducted by telephone. Telephone interviews depend especially on the competence of self-presentation and a high level of abstraction of the experts. They suit best to retrieve reflected knowledge such as experiences, recommendations, and procedures (Christmann 2009, 200). Moreover, a conversation on the phone demands more attention. Therefore, Christmann recommends keeping the interviews rather short and concrete (Christmann 2009, 219).

In the case of convictional lobbying in the EU, convictional lobbyists share knowledge about the concrete activities of convictional lobbying organizations, their priorities, and the

cooperation among each other. This knowledge is neither accessible on their websites, nor through any other documents provided by the EU. Therefore, all representatives of convictional organizations to the EU are potential experts for the analysis. However, not all convictional lobbyists share the same level of professionalism. Well established and traditional lobbying groups like CEC and COMECE do have more experiences in lobbying than for instance representatives of religious minorities. Furthermore, convictional organizations are characterized by different ideological backgrounds. To gain the most objectifiable knowledge, the set of experts interviewed must involve different convictional lobbying groups and cover different ideologies.

For this study, all religious organizations listed in the transparency register of the Commission and providing information in English on their websites were contacted by E-Mail and briefly informed about the research interest. Some organizations further inform about their lobbyists online. In this case, they were contacted additionally. The secular organizations registered as NGOs were detected by the protocols of meetings within the dialogue with churches, religious associations or communities, and philosophical and non-confessional organizations (European Commission 2017b).

Four experts replayed and confirmed for an interview. Each expert belongs to a different convictional organization: one long-established Christian lobbying organization, one Christian lobbying organization outside of CEC and COMECE, one Christian national church, and one organization representing Islam. The experts differ in terms of their professionalism in lobbying to the EU. While the first three work as representatives in Brussels and are specialized on EU policy in general or on a particular area of EU policy, the latter one functions as a general representative for their organization. Representing it to European institutions takes a rather marginal role in their activities. Still, they provide information about the ambitions of religious lobbying and supplement the answers by their specific ideological background. Therefore, this expert is also considered in the analysis.

The questionnaire is based on three thematic blocks: the promotion of institutional interest and the common good, the cooperation among convictional lobbyists in Brussels involving also possible conflicts among them, and finally, for theorization, the construction of a European identity based on the concept of civil religion and the contribution of convictional lobbying to

it.² The latter point is not relevant to answer the research question but provides additional information for discussing the impact of convictional lobbying in the EU.

The interviews were introduced with an opening including a short presentation of the research project and the question for the consent to record the call for the purpose of data processing. One interview took around twenty to forty minutes depending on the time and the willingness to talk of the expert. The questionnaire was adjusted to the outcomes of previous interviews by adding more questions concerning controversial issues and shortening rather general ones.

The interviews have been recorded and transcribed.³ To maintain the preservation of anonymity, the names of the experts and their organizations are disguised. The following analysis is based on codes derived from the answers. One code covers one particular answer such as for instance ‘high cooperation’ or ‘inform members’. The part of the text a code refers to is named ‘coding’. Because of the limited time of the interview, the experts could not repeat their answers often. Therefore, all codings are included into the analysis. The content related to one code mentioned by several experts is further generalized. The generalization summarizes the given answers on the same issue.⁴

4.2.3. Websites

Most convictional representatives on an EU level provide a website where they introduce themselves and report about their activities in Brussels. It addresses primarily their members and followers and serves as an information platform for both, the EU policy concerning the own community or issues of religious or philosophical relevance, and the organization’s view on it. It summarizes the basic convictions promoted by the lobbying groups in an easy language accessible to a wider public and understandable without a deep background knowledge of the EU’s legal structure. Moreover, the lobbying organizations explain the EU, evaluate its policy, and embed the European integration project into their worldviews and ideologies.

In order to gain a representative overview, the analysis is based on the websites of the largest and most established convictional lobbying groups as well as smaller organizations. CEC captures several national churches and COMECE speaks for all Catholic actors. Therefore, they are not considered additionally. Further organizations are EEA representing Evangelical Protestants and EHF speaking for a European Humanism. While the first three lobbying groups

² The detailed questionnaire in annex 8.3.1.

³ The detailed interviews in annex 8.3.2.-8.3.5.

⁴ The detailed analysis in annex 8.1.

have a Christian background, the latter one is based on secular convictions. This constellation seems to cover a great part of the religious belonging of EU citizens.

Additionally, the corpus is complemented by the websites of representatives of other religions involving Baihais within BIC, Hindu within HFE, and Muslims within EML. Although representations of religious minorities often have a representation office in Brussels, their primary focus is not necessarily EU policy. Therefore, their websites give rather general insights about their goals and provide little content about EU issues. Still, they give relevant information concerning the values they promote. Other convictional organizations do not have an internet representation specialized on the EU and in English or do not give insight into general values promoted. This suggests that their convictional lobbying activities are rather marginal and therefore little relevant for this study.

The corpus of analysis is composed by the steady content of the websites summarizing general positions and goals of the organizations. To capture their activities, it further contains the news published in the year 2016 addressing European values or the EU in general in their titles. Finally, it includes documents published by some of the actors about their general vision of Europe and the EU (CEC 2016; COMECE 2016; EHF 2007).⁵

To investigate the consistency of religious content this analysis strives to examine and compare the concrete convictions and beliefs regarding the EU. It involves values as well as statements about the meaning and purpose of the EU, its opposition and treats, and the future vision for the European project. The codes for analyzing are derived from the material. One code describes one value, meaning, threat, or future vision regardless of the message connected to the code. Because websites repeat regularly content, codings of one actor reflecting the same messages are just one time mentioned in the analysis. The generalization summarizes the code and the messages by the actors. Although only religious content beyond the values mentioned in the legal base of the EU is relevant for the hypotheses, the analysis includes all religious content mentioned, in the case fundamental values are interpreted differently.

If several lobbying organizations refer to the same code with the same message, the religious content promoted is consistent. If one code is mentioned only by some of the lobbying groups, it does not mean that it reflects automatically inconsistent content. It might be possible that other organizations share this position but do not highlight it on their websites. However,

⁵ The detailed corpus composition in annex 8.3.

inconsistency of contents is proven when two or more organizations refer to the same code but with different messages. An example would be if two lobbying groups emphasize the purpose of the EU to protect Europe's religious fundament. Thus, *protecting Europe's religious fundament* would be a code. Whereas one lobbying organization concludes that this means protecting the Christian guiding culture from foreign influences, the other one interprets it as the need to strengthen in particular the rights of religious minorities in the EU. In this case, both convictional organizations mention the same code but promote contradicting messages. The religious content would be inconsistent.

4.3. Results of the Expert Interview Analysis

The results of the expert interview analysis are structured according to the thematic blocks of the questionnaire. In the beginning, the experts were asked to introduce their general activities and explain the role of convictional lobbying. They informed about different lobbying organizations and presented comparable and conflicting policy goals. Finally, the questions aimed to theorize convictional lobbying and link it to identity construction or civil religion in the EU.

4.3.1. Promotion of Religious Content

The first part of the questionnaire focused on the self-understanding of convictional lobbyists and the differences to other lobbying organizations in Brussels. Whereas lobbying is usually based on individual interest, convictional lobbying is characterized by the ambition to implement general values and, based on them, to strive for common good. However, convictional organizations are also actors among many other actors of civil society. To maintain their existence, they also have institutional interest concerning their organization or their members and followers. It is postulated that convictional organizations do both, usual lobbying and convictional lobbying. Therefore, the issue needs to be approached by open questions. The experts were asked what distinguishes convictional lobbying from other lobbying in the EU and what goals their organizations pursue. It reveals to what extent their daily praxis is based on institutional or on goals concerning the common good.

Asking about the differences to other lobbying groups representing companies or NGOs, three experts claimed that in comparison to most of the lobbyists in Brussels, they represent non-profit organizations with a financial independence (Expert 1, 18; Expert 2, 15; Expert 3, 10-11). This was especially highlighted regarding the self-determination of their political agendas:

“The good thing is that we are volunteers. Each of us does voluntary support with our money, with our time. This is very important. This means that we have no support from the government or any kind of association, any kind of thinking. This gives us the opportunity to be nothing like a flag.” (Expert 2, 15)

Although other lobbyists work on a professional level as employees, they agree to the importance of being financially independent. It enables them to not pursue any profit interest: “Well, one difference with the companies is of course that we are not a 'for-profit organization'. Our finances rely on fees from our members and revenue from our own activities.” (Expert 1, 18). One expert further emphasized that this gives them the chance to follow a common good approach:

“I: I would also like to know what distinguishes you, a representative of a religious institution, from other types of interest representatives in the EU such as companies or NGOs or think tanks?

E3: As I said we are doing a lot of advocacy work for groups who don't have a lobby office here because they are marginalized and in general I would say we work for the common good. So, there is no financial interest behind our advocacy work. There is no sort of hidden agenda or, compared to other organizations, not only one interest focus but it's quite a broad focus.” (Expert 3, 9-11)

Another expert further mentioned the particularity about religious organizations: “that's also one of the reasons why the EU considers that the role of organized religion is so significant, because it does represent an entire section of society, individuals, certain kind of thinking, and format in the society as well” (Expert 1, 19).

Besides the difference to other lobbying organization, the questionnaire related to goals and duties of convictional lobbyists. In sum, they mentioned general issues, third parties' interest as well as institutional concerns. One expert further noted a responsibility to provide information about relevant debates to the members of their organization (Expert 1, 6, 10, 12).

All experts agreed to promote in general the common good (Expert 1, 54; Expert 2, 25; Expert 3, 11; Expert 4, 6). Moreover, they considered other convictional lobbying groups doing the same:

“This is purely my perspective on this but I think that a good number of religious organizations tend to work for the common good. There is of course, I believe a legitimate, a degree of defending their own interest or representing their own interest. But in several areas of policy they tend to take a common good approach.” (Expert 1, 54)

This is also confirmed in the case of nonreligious convictional organizations (Expert 4, 25-26).

Although the experts declared to also have institutional interest, they gave them a rather marginal role in their daily activities: “I think we would specifically address the interest of [denomination] only if there is a specific case that is especially concerning to the [denominational] public” (Expert 1, 56). Two experts mentioned that this is especially the case when EU legislation touches the rights of religious organizations on a member state level

(Expert 3, 4; Expert 4, 8-9): “Because this state-religion and state-church relation is so different in Europe, because of the history, because of the culture. Therefore, we do not want the EU institutions have the competence to do law or legislation about that” (Expert 4, 9).

Asking to evaluate the content promoted by the organization on a scale from one standing for institutional interest and five standing for the common good, two experts positioned their organization on four (Expert 1, 56; Expert 4, 11). Another one stressed an interdependence between both ambitions:

“E3: The institutional interests are as important as the general interests.

I: So, you say both is the same important?

E3: Yes. Because the institutional interests are a sort of prerequisite for the other work we are doing. So, if the church had not the autonomy granted also from the German constitutional law but also by European law, by article 17 TFEU, they could not do their social work, they could not do their advocacy work. So, it is a prerequisite to have this autonomy in order to also be present in other areas of society. So, it's very strongly interlinked.” (Expert 3, 13-15)

Practically, the promotion of the common good is interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it involves defending third parties' interest: “The EU did a lot of legislation also in the social field and the church also very much sees itself as an advocate for groups not having an own lobby organization in Brussels like refugees, like people who are socially marginalized” (Expert 3, 5). On the other hand, it means taking a moral point of view more important than the own interest. To give an example, two experts mentioned situations where their organizations in order to take a stand for a value, defended the interest of other religions or denominations instead of looking for their own advantages (Expert 1, 57-59; Expert 2, 15).

Finally, the experts explained broadly their vision of the common good in Europe. Hereby, they mentioned freedom of religion as very important (Expert 1, 11, 54; Expert 2, 9; Expert 4, 22). Another issue of concern is to avoid conflicts and to promote peace (Expert 2, 2, 13, 25; Expert 3, 11; Expert 4, 22). Moreover, togetherness in Europe is considered as the common good (Expert 3, 8; Expert 4, 3). This also affects more issues:

“We feel that this togetherness will really help to face all the challenges, either terrorism or the social inequalities which are rising or the populist voices which are more and more gaining power. The future of Europe concerns us very much and we feel that the church is really asked to get involved also to defend the European values as they are in the treaty in the EU. Therefore, I think our vision is to have more Europe and also a better EU structure.” (Expert 3, 8)

4.3.2. Differences among Convictional Lobbyists

To understand and evaluate convictional lobbying it is also necessary to become aware of the differences among convictional organizations active on the EU level. Some of them represent churches or conglomeration of churches, others are part of religious or denominational

communities and again others represent philosophical currents. While explaining their experiences with convictional lobbying in the EU, the experts autonomously distinguished between different groups and discussed their organizational structures and ideological backgrounds in comparison to each other.

Differences have been outlined between religious and nonreligious actors, different religions but also different denominations within a religion. Regarding Christian organizations, one expert noted differences concerning the self-understanding as a part of civil society:

“The [Christian organization] would see themselves as part of civil society. If you had to interview with COMECE for example, they would not have the same answer. They believe that because they represent the church, or a church, they have a distinctly different nature which we can understand but seen from a purely legal standpoint it’s hard, it’s a hard case to make. So, we would see ourselves as a movement within civil society, distinct but part of civil society.” (Expert 1, 20)

Informing about representations of other religions, the experts mainly discussed Jewish and Muslim organizations. They told that especially Muslim communities struggle to form a common voice in the EU and are therefore relatively weak represented (Expert 1, 33-35; Expert 3, 17). They justified it with the diversity of the Islam in Europe: “There is no European Muslim representation for example which is understandable because there is not one Islam but there are different confessions in the Islam as well and it's very manifold” (Expert 3, 17). Also, the Muslim representative stated that lobbying to EU institution is not their major focus (Expert 2, 21). Instead of concrete policy interventions, they prefer to work on a diplomatic level and represents their organization only when they are invited to do so (Expert 2, 25).

In comparison to this, Jewish organizations are represented in the EU but do not share a universal approach to EU policy:

“When it comes to Jewish representatives, there are many organizations in Brussels but they do not have the broad outlook on EU affairs as we do. So, they do not work for example on the common EU asylum system or on the European pillar of social rights to name some examples of our current work.” (Expert 3, 18)

One expert further distinguished between religious Jewish organizations rather following institutional interests and secular Jewish organizations with a more humanist point of view (Expert 1, 20).

Besides mentioning differences among religious organizations, the experts compared them to secular lobbying groups with a philosophical background. They have in common that they represent a certain worldview and strive for the common good (Expert 1, 5; Expert 4, 25-26). Differences they stated mainly regarding their representational fundament:

“I: There are also organizations, I mentioned before, secular organizations representing unbeliever’s interest. Would you consider them as something comparable to religious organizations?

E1: I would say 'Yes' and 'No'. Yes, in so far as they represent a worldview or a set of worldviews and 'No' in so far as they tend to not really represent communities. They tend to represent currents of opinion or currents of virtues in a society but not really communities. That's a difference. I mean it's the fact, recognizing God or not recognizing God is not even an issue.” (Expert 1, 51-52)

While religious communities and in particular churches have a clearly defined number of members, determining the people represented by secular organizations poses difficulties:

“Of course, they [secular organizations] can say everybody who is an unbeliever is our member but that's not the same. While the churches have a very clear system where you can see whether they are speaking for one million people or 20 million and I think this also makes a difference” (Expert 3, 28).

Further deepening this issue, in two interviews the interviewer broached the complaints mainly articulated by EHF that nonreligious organizations are discriminated in comparison to religious representations. The experts objected the statement stating that EU officials care much about an equal treatment of organizations with different ideological backgrounds (Expert 3, 26; Expert 4, 35-37).

4.3.3. Cooperation and Conflicts among Convictional Lobbyists

To investigate if religious content is based on consistency, it is important to check whether different lobbying groups cooperate among each other and share common interest. Furthermore, it is necessary to ask about little cooperation and conflicting interest or values. The experts mentioned a high level of cooperation with some actors, a general will to cooperate, and sometimes only little cooperation due to diverse reasons. Furthermore, they spoke about common interest and conflict lines among convictional lobbyists.

A high cooperation is noted especially among organizations of the same religion (Expert 1, 26; Expert 2, 17; Expert 3, 20; Expert 4, 13). On the one hand, this is justified by a shared worldview. On the other hand, Christian organizations tend to be more established on the EU level and therefore have constructed networks among them:

“I would say CEC and COMECE [have a high cooperation], the two organizations you named and then many other Christian organizations like Caritas or Jesuit refugee service. So, those who have been long established here. We work very close together except for some minor differences but we have basically the same approach.” (Expert 3, 20)

Besides organizations of the same religion, convictional lobbyists do cooperate with representatives of other religions and philosophies even though less intense:

“In the more broader religious field it [cooperation] is a little bit more vague and not so developed like with the [other Christian organization], but there are for instance in the human rights area... I know that my colleague is very much working for instance with the Bahai who are very open for this kind of cooperation and we are looking also more and more for, let's say not cooperation but also exchange and

then also cooperation with other religions.” (Expert 4, 14)

In general, the experts assured that they would cooperate with all kinds of organizations independent of the ideological background (Expert 1, 26-28, Expert 2, 23, 26-28):

“Actually, we have this philosophy we are calling 'Co-belligerence', which basically means fighting together and this philosophy pretends that if we find an agreement with another movement or organization to retain a certain general goal, we would be open to working with them even though we differ on other issues.” (Expert 1, 28)

Correspondingly, the convictional lobbyists observed a convergence concerning some issues not only within their religion but also among all convictional lobbying organizations (Expert 1, 29-30; Expert 3, 19-20; Expert 4, 22).

“I: Which are the areas of convergence?

E1: Social rights, the fight against poverty, the protection of migrants and weak people, the protection of children, freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion or belief, environmental issues. There is a lot of agreement around these issues.” (Expert 1, 40)

Another expert emphasizes especially peace and religious freedom (Expert 4, 22).

If convictional lobbyists tend to cooperate little with other organizations, then it is mostly because of different levels of involvement into EU policy (Expert 3, 17; Expert 4, 14, 18). Some organizations are broadly diversified and cover many policy areas while others focus mainly on general representing tasks. Moreover, sometimes they work on different issues and do not get into a situation to cooperate (Expert 3, 22). One expert also mentioned some situations with a low cooperation due to an unconstructive attitude of in particular secular organizations:

“Here in Brussels I felt very often, I felt that... for example when there was the debate about a constitution for Europe I think that the churches have been very pro-European and really voiced their engagement very much while I really feel that on EU level, I cannot say on member state level, maybe it's different, but the humanists were not very constructive let's say.” (Expert 3, 30)

Correspondingly, the expert interviews also reveal content related differences among convictional lobbying organizations. Two experts noted thematic fields like family policy and bioethics which are dividing the Christian representatives (Expert 1, 39; Expert 3, 20):

“Catholics and Protestants do not have the same approach on family policy depending on the Protestant confession of course but CEC and COMECE tend not to work together on such issues, there are doctrinal differences, whereas the East Orthodox, the Catholics and the Evangelicals tend to have a more similar approach.” (Expert 1, 39)

However, one expert stressed that these conflicting approaches do not separate the different denominations but rather pose conflict lines within each Christian community:

“E4: Well, you know the problem is that - you have a lot of problems about that [family policy and bioethics], that's true - but it's going somehow through the churches. Inside of the churches you have this kind of discussions, even in the Orthodox churches and also in the Catholic Church. I mean even the Pope has done a slightly different wording about homosexual partners some month ago and of course there was a broad debate then in the Catholic Church. Inside of the church you have a different understanding. That

is also true for the Protestant churches. You cannot point out to one church and say 'They are of this opinion or that opinion on that issue, it's totally clear'. No, there is a certain division and ongoing discussion of this kind of issues inside of the churches.” (Expert 4, 33)

Another critical point being discussed is the role of religion in policy and in the society. While religious organizations see the need for an exchange between religion and politics, secular organizations prefer religion to be a primarily private issue:

“I mean there is a certain tradition and culture to say that religion is a private issue and it has to be a private issue and it has not to play a role in the public sphere, in the political sphere. To make a very clear distinction and separation between these two areas. I think we, the churches and religions, would phrase it in a different way. From the Christian perspective, I would say also the Catholic Church would agree on that, we say of course there should be and must be a clear distinction between the political and the religious or church area which does not mean that there aren't discussions, and necessary discussions and exchanges between these fields. This is needed. Like we have it in Germany and other countries. I think in this question of conceptualization there is a clear difference between humanist's and also freemason's point of views and the point of views of churches and religions.” (Expert 4, 28)

4.3.4. Influence of Convictional Lobbying

The last part of the questionnaire aimed to theorize the research interest and to gain interpretative knowledge of the experts. It aspires the expert's estimation of how convictional lobbying can contribute to the emergence of a European civil religion. For this purpose, it is necessary to carve out their understanding of a civil religion in the EU first. Because civil religion theory is not wide spread known yet, the questions are related to the term European identity. In one case, one expert turned out to be quite familiar with civil religion theory and was asked directly. Although a question aiming the idea of European identity addresses rather the personal opinion than the particular knowledge due to the function as convictional lobbyists, the answers are necessary to further understand how convictional lobbyists conceptualize their influence to identity construction in the EU.

The experts referred to a European identity based on common values, an understanding covering one aspect of civil religion (Expert 1, 46; Expert 3, 33; Expert 4, 29). Nevertheless, two experts shared doubts about whether such an identity already exists among European citizens (Expert 3, 31-33; Expert 4, 39). The expert familiar with civil religion theory stated that there is no civil religion in the EU yet:

“I: So, may I ask you directly: Do you think there is a civil religion in the EU?

E1: I don't think so. I think that's one of the weaknesses of the EU but it's a very understandable one. The EU does not have a political culture. A unified political culture. It's a very recent organization and the narrative inspirational nature of the EU disappeared or was eclipsed very quickly by the common market and economic interest.” (Expert 1, 64-65)

However, all experts claimed that religion has contributed or can contribute to the emergence

of a European identity (Expert 1, 50, 69-70; Expert 2, 33-34; Expert 3, 37; Expert 4, 47):

“I think religion has contributed tremendously to the formation of European identity or a set of European virtues. Religious communities being centers of reflection, questioning, critique, philosophy, these are ideal places to ask the right questions and perhaps even revive European identity because religions are story telling machines, they are poetry in community, they can generate vision and therefore I think they have a powerful role but they're not the only ones.” (Expert 1, 50)

Two experts explained the particular influence of religion with ecumenism being a positive example (Expert 3, 35; Expert 4, 51). One mentions an inspiring power of religion which lacks in the EU: “The fact is, I can see it firsthand that when I meet officials from the European Commission, they understand that religious organizations have a strong inspiring power and the institutions lack this inspiring power” (Expert 1, 72). Additionally, one stated that his or her organization strives to contribute to a debate about European identity:

“I: Does the [organization] want to contribute to the emergence of a European identity? Is this one goal of the [organization]?”

E3: We want to contribute to the debate. I would think it is a little bit exaggerated as a national church to have this as a goal because Europe is very broad and as I said, very different. There is this saying that we want unity in diversity and I think this is very much also our experience in our ecumenical relationships. So, we can share our experiences and I really hope that this contribution can inspire also others to keep on debating and to see the need to have this debate.” (Expert 3, 34-35)

The importance of organized religion in Europe is especially stressed with regard to religious issues and in particular Islamist terrorism becoming more salient in the European public sphere:

“I mean the whole issue of religion now, I think it comes really up because of the... how to phrase it now in a correct way... of the Ratlosigkeit [perplexity]... the discussion about how do we integrate in our societies and in Europe the Islam and Muslim communities in the right way. All countries have certain problems there, like France, like Germany, and others. Of course, because of all the attacks which had a certain Islamist terrorist background. Of course, it's not the Islam, but the people are related to a certain Islamic background. Of course, there is the question now more coming up in the institutions, how do we deal with this kind of phenomenon?” (Expert 4, 36)

The prevention of a clash of cultures reflects also one major motivation of the Muslim representative for his or her lobbying activities on a European level:

“I was invited as a representation of the [organization], so of course I can tell you that it's important for the European institutions to listen directly from ourselves what is our necessity and how we can work together to prevent a clash not only of the civilization but also of all religions, especially in this particular moment.” (Expert 2, 4)

However, the experts also mentioned obstacles limiting the impact of religious organizations. One expert noted a lack of understanding of religion in EU institutions which complicates religious lobbying:

“But we are facing another problem which is the level of religious illiteracy in public institutions in Europe, a lack of understanding of religion and a kind of fear because of secularization. There is a misunderstanding that religions cannot really play a role. And that's a wide spread understanding.” (Expert 1, 72)

Another one doubts the general importance of religion and religious organizations in the EU: „I mean you have to see that in the center of the EU is still the internal market and the free movement of people, the free movement of goods, the free movement of money. That is what the EU is very much about. That is not about religions and churches and so on” (Expert 4, 37).

4.4. Results of the Website Analysis

Although the experts partly informed about areas of convergence which all convictional lobbyists share, the interviews due to a limited time could only give little insight into the general ideologies promoted. On their websites, convictional lobbying organizations inform in particular their followers about their activities on the EU level. They explain which values they promote, what the EU stands for, and how it can be understood within the own worldview. The following results of the website analysis introduce values promoted concerning EU policy, the meaning and purpose of the EU, its opposition and threats, and the future vision for Europe. The codes mentioned by most lobbyists are presented first.

4.4.1. Promoted Values

Values play an important role for convictional lobbyists expressing the ideological background of the organizations and their guiding principles in EU policy. Not all lobbying organizations provide a comprehensive overview of their ambitions and recent activities. However, all give insight into the values building the fundament of their work.

Without exception, all analyzed organizations declare to promote *peace* (BIC; CEC; COMECE; EEA; EHF; EML; HFE). This issue gets especially emphasized by less established lobbying groups as basic motivation to influence policy making: “Among the many shining stars of the European flag, we would like to radiate our light, contributing to the development, prosperity and general peace, of our beloved european [sic] land” (EML Website). Still, also the established lobbying groups highlight the importance of peace as their priority: “Peacebuilding and reconciliation are among the deepest historical roots of CEC and continue to form a major part of our *raison d’être*” (CEC Website). In comparison to the less established organizations, they additionally give concrete advices for domestic and foreign policy in order to promote and guaranty peace.

Furthermore, convictional organizations give an importance to the promotion of *solidarity and social justice* among EU citizens (BIC; CEC; COMECE; EHF; EML; HFE). They claim it to be a central value in the EU although it is not always fully respected. In this way, they consider

themselves as defenders of this value against egoist interest and political deviations: “We call on the Commission but also and above all on the Council to put the values of equality, solidarity and social justice back at the heart of the European project” (EHF News, 4).

Doing so, convictional lobbyists give solidarity also a universal relevance especially with regard to the refugee crises. Many of them call in particular for *solidarity with migrants and refugees* (BIC; CEC; COMECE; EEA; EHF). The Christian organizations justify it by a religious mission (CEC; COMECE; EEA):

“The present situation is extremely urgent. It does immeasurable harm to the soul of Europe to ward off victims of violence and terror by fire-arms at border fences, or let people drown in the Mediterranean. Solidarity with refugees is a consequence of Christian faith and our commitment to working towards a just and compassionate society.” (CEC 2016, 8)

For this reason, EEA promotes a ‘Love-Europe’ app which should help refugees to orientate in Europe: “Our main focus is to share love and show hospitality to the refugees. [...] We want the app ‘Love-Europe’ to help refugees find with what they need most” (EEA News, 4). BIC and EHF further mention a European advantage of being open-minded towards migrants and refugees: “We believe that they [refugees and migrants] do not only contribute economically and demographically to our societies, they also bring with them new cultures and traditions that make the European society rich and diverse” (EHF News, 7).

Accordingly, *tolerance and pluralism* is considered as very important in Europe (BIC; CEC; COMECE; EEA; EHF; EML). For religious minorities, it constitutes a condition for their organizational existence. Correspondingly, they highlight it on their websites and emphasize the importance of respect towards all kinds of beliefs within their ideologies (BIC; EML): “Preserve European values of human dignity by drawing on the Hindu ethos that is rooted in respect for all traditions, cultures, religions and belief” (HFE Website). Also, established lobbying groups emphasize the diversity in European culture: “Another important issue is recognition of and respect for diversity. Throughout its history, there was never a homogenous (Christian) Europe, and the Europe of the future will also be pluralist” (CEC 2016, 12). Therefore, religious organizations call for an interfaith dialog. The ambition to build bridges is further shared by the EHF: “Ideologies, nationalism, fundamentalism, partisan opinions have no place in humanism which instead stands for tolerance, openness to others, the wish to build bridges between different beliefs, religions and political forces” (EHF Website).

Another value promoted is the protection of *human rights* (BIC; CEC; COMECE; EEA; EHF; Hindu Forum). EEA and HFE derive it from their religious background. EHF instead stresses

that its “values come neither from divine authority nor from a particular tradition or culture but are deeply grounded in human nature and are universal” (EHF Website). However, EHF adds that its understanding of human rights is not shared by all convictional lobbyists. They fear a threat coming from conservative religious lobbying especially concerning the right for self-determination:

“Although the European Union is founded on the shared principles of human rights and the rule of law, in practice EU decision-making is subject to strong lobbying by conservative religious organisations trying to impose their views on issues like women’s reproductive and sexual health and rights, LGBT rights, euthanasia, freedom of expression, etc. These groups present themselves as “human rights oriented” and against discriminations, sometimes in a very deceptive way. They use human rights terminology to fight against contraception, abortion, freedom of speech, gay marriage/adoption or stem cell research.” (EHF Website)

Other convictional lobbying organizations do not mention any conflicting interpretations of human rights.

A comparable case is the value *religious freedom* mentioned by several convictional lobbyists (BIC; CEC; COMECE; EEA; EHF). Whereas the religious organizations treat it with a high priority especially regarding religious minorities, EHF notes that unbelievers are not considered equally in the EU:

“In the meetings we have had with EU institutions since then, non-confessionals have not always been treated as equals with churches representatives. With the European Parliament and the EU Commission, the EHF had to fight hard to make sure that non-believers’ voice was heard and respected in these meetings.” (EHF Website)

Other values mentioned such as *education* (BIC; CEC; COMECE; EHF; EML), *democracy* (CEC; EHF), and *environmental protection* (CEC; COMECE) are not related to any conflicting messages. This changes when it comes to the importance of *bioethics* in EU policy making (CEC; COMECE; EHF). While Christian organizations marginally note the need for ethics in policy concerning life-changing issues with the goal to maintain relevant decisions on a national level (COMECE Website), EHF states here a major difference among convictional lobbyists:

“The difference between a secularist/humanist outlook and a religious one is often very plain in matters concerning the beginning and end of life – bioethical questions concerning stem-cell and genetic research, medically-aided conception, abortion, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, etc. The root of the difference lies in the religious view of life as a conditional gift from God by contrast with the humanist one of life as our own to optimise according to human considerations – and the secularist view that the state should not interfere in such matters on the basis of any religion or belief.” (EHF Website)

Furthermore, EHF promotes a series of values the other organizations do not mention, such as *gender equality*, *individual freedom* especially regarding sexuality and family planning, and *secularity*. Paradoxically, while emphasizing the latter one, EHF rejects convictional lobbying in general. It justifies its own activities solely with the need to represent the convictions of

unbelievers equally:

“Deeply committed to secularism, the EHF first strongly opposed the creation of a specific dialogue between European institutions and religious/non-confessional organisations. However, since the churches obtained the introduction of Article 17 TFEU, we have decided that we must take advantage of this opportunity rather than leave the floor to the churches.” (EHF Website)

4.4.2. Meaning and Purpose of the EU

While informing their members and followers about EU policy, convictional lobbyists introduce to the EU and embed European integration process into their ideologies. Hereby, they give meaning to the EU and explain the purpose of its existence.

Most of convictional lobbyists emphasize the responsibility of the EU to *protect values* Europe stands for (CEC; COMECE; EEA; EHF; HFE): “The integration of Europe, as the European Union, was a visionary project. It went beyond reconciling states and aspired to unite the peoples of Europe around the notion of a ‘community of shared values’.” (CEC 2016, 5). The Christian organizations CEC and COMECE see these values as a part of the Christian heritage: “The process of European integration is based on values rooted mainly in Christian inspiration and widely held as a universal ethos” (COMECE 2016, 13). The EHF traces them back to a universal humanism: “All human communities share very similar moral attitudes (seeing virtue in courage, compassion, truthfulness, friendship etc), attitudes enshrined in moral codes dating from long before Christianity” (EHF 2007, 3).

Still, CEC and COMECE as well as EHF fear these European values endangered and recognize a role of the EU to defend them: “The present situation and prevailing mood presents a threat to the values on which the EU was built. [...] If the EU were to unravel, the common values on which it is based could be endangered as well” (CEC 2016, 11). Therefore, the “EU has to firmly and coherently defend the values of the European project” (EHF News, 4). COMECE widens this responsibility on the whole European people: “Promoting common values and addressing the threats to them is a common and shared European responsibility” (COMECE 2016, 14).

Another purpose of the EU highlighted by convictional lobbyists is to *provide peace* in Europe as well as abroad (BIC; CEC; COMECE; EHF). COMECE considers it as the EU’s vocation in the world (COMECE News, 8). CEC embeds it into a founding myth of the EU mentioning also a Christian background:

“It was in this febrile atmosphere in the mid-twentieth century that a small multinational group of devout Christian statesmen came together and dared to pray for, dream of, and proclaim the possibility of a better

way—a way for the diverse peoples of Europe to live and prosper together in peace” (CEC 2016, 3).

This again contradicts to the view of EHF:

“Contrary to some powerful voices, religion – and specifically Christianity – does not bring us together but instead divides us. Religious spokesmen (rarely women) like to refer to their beliefs as ‘humanist’ but this is a thin and meagre ‘humanism’ that is merely a restraint upon their devotion to a transcendent realm, a label adopted under pressure of criticism.” (EHF 2007, 2)

Finally, BIC, without pointing out any negative or positive religious influence, conceptualizes European integration as a role model in the world: “Europe’s transition from a war-torn region to a project of peace is a testimony of humanity’s ability to transcend long-standing conflicts in pursuit of a collective good” (BIC Website).

Correspondingly, convictional organizations mention the purpose to *unite European peoples* as meaningful for the EU (BIC; CEC; COMECE): “The fragmented and divided Europe of the 1940s and 1950s needed to surmount political divisions to devote itself anew to the peoples torn apart by the Second World War” (CEC Website). Moreover, the European unification is not only caused by practical reasons but also by a spiritual relationship: “The existing cultural and spiritual ties should be preserved, used and reinforced in the future” (COMECE News, 5).

The *common market* is also a purpose of the EU mentioned by some lobbying groups (CEC; COMECE; EEA). However, it is integrated into a broader vision and CEC warns that the “European Union cannot survive as a beacon of hope if the law of the market is the only guiding principle” (CEC 2016, 18). The established lobbying groups CEC and COMECE furthermore stress a *global responsibility* of the EU. Finally, CEC carves out *common problems* which can only be solved by a close cooperation of EU member states: “It is clear that individual countries are less effective in tackling their problems when they act on their own than when they coordinate with other countries. They need partnerships and networks to amplify their voice and strengthen their influence” (CEC 2016, 2).

4.4.3. Opposition and Threat to the EU

The results concerning the purpose of the EU showed that convictional lobbying organizations tend to conceptualize European integration as good and desirable. To find out how convictional lobbyists integrate the EU into their broader worldviews, it is also necessary to look at what they consider as opposition and threat to the European project.

Many convictional organizations see the EU in opposition to *national egoism and division* between peoples (BIC; CEC; COMECE; EEA; EHF). The rising devotion to national goals is

considered as unfaithful to the idea of European integration: “Rather, we see a growing body of opinion that has lost faith in the promise of a united Europe, that distrusts political elites, and that would like to renationalise policies” (CEC 2016, 2). National egoism is condemned in diverse ideologies and even motivates EHF to fall back on religious allegories: “Europe has to face its demons. Nationalism is a centrifugal force that undermines international solidarity and friendship between peoples” (EHF 2007, 9). Overcoming nationalism in order to achieve the common good poses a consensus among the convictional groups. Therefore, BIC calls upon “a conception of our identity that is wider, one which expands to include all of humanity” (BIC News, 3).

Furthermore, *populism* is considered as threat to the EU (CEC; COMECE; EEA; EHF). However, there are several kinds of populism the organizations refer to. EEA and EHF set themselves apart from a populism judging about migrants and refugees: “Arousing fear and hatred of migrants, encouraging demagogic discourse and communitarianism only lead to political chaos, economic crisis, resentment and a country’s implosion” (EHF News, 4). In this context, EEA states that “the refugee crisis has become a “spiritual revealer” (EEA News, 3). CEC and COMECE rather focus on a national populism against the EU and blame it for a growing Euroscepticism: “Politicians who have, in the course of time, blamed the EU for many problems that were not the EU’s responsibility, have contributed to this alienation between the EU institutions and its citizens” (CEC 2016, 10). Finally, EHF fears a threat coming from religious populism: “The report [Freedom of Thought Report 2016] also examines the rise of populist parties and leaders, and how in some cases they are giving rise to a new breed of ‘traditionalist and religious authoritarianism’” (EHF News, 1).

Besides political developments within the EU, the organizations condemn universal issues as threat to the European project, such as *materialism and egoism* (CEC; COMECE; EEA; EHF), *poverty and social exclusion* (BIC; COMECE EHF), and *racism and xenophobia* (BIC; COMECE; EHF). Against this background, COMECE states that a solidarity-based Europe “entails everyone’s contribution so that Europe may become an authentic solidarity-based community, overcoming egoisms and closures” (COMECE News, 2).

Another threat mentioned mainly by EHF but also by the EEA is the fear of movements claiming to be religious but promoting a *religious conservatism and extremism* which is manipulating Europeans. However, the two organization conceptualize it very differently. EHF again turns against conventional religious representatives in Brussels: “Religious lobbies are

pressuring policymakers for exemptions or for permission to impose their views on the rest of society” (EHF News, 3). Their mistrust addresses mainly conservative Christians, who “present themselves as victims of discrimination which they call “Christian persecution” or “christianophobia”. They hide behind “religious freedom” to implement their conservative agenda and to limit human rights and equality” (EHF Website). Christianophobia is not mentioned by any Christian lobbying organization. Instead, a representative of EEA analyses ideological movements which

“are using a religious language to portray the state as a kind of “saviour god” against supposed enemies. In the new context, Christians can be fearful – some are concerned about Islam and its impact in their society, and are hurt when they are labelled as “racists”- but also, at times, too naïve about the effects of migration.” (EEA News, 3)

Relating to the foundation of the EU, convictional lobbying groups see the EU as an opposition to *dictatorship* (CEC; EHF). Besides totalitarian regimes, both, CEC and EHF condemn particular religious ideologies: “In the history of Europe, people living on our continent have had devastating experiences with ideologies claiming to set clearly defined cultural, ethnic and religious or pseudo-religious standards which apply to everybody” (CEC 2016, 4). EHF addresses its accusation more concretely: “Europe started as an uneasy juxtaposition of rival empires, of conquerors and all powerful monarchs. The Catholic Church was for a long time the only spiritual power, made use of by powerful politicians the better to control people’s minds.” (EHF 2007, 6). The EU in contrast stands for unity and freedom of belief.

Finally, the Christian lobbying organizations conceptualize multiple *crises* as a threat to the EU (CEC; COMECE; EEA). CEC further fears European values endangered:

“Many of the values which are seen as having contributed to the shaping of Europe during the past sixty years or so, such as solidarity with the weak and respect for human rights, seem to evaporate under the pressure of multiple crises. The churches in Europe must seek to uphold these values as an indispensable basis for justice and peace on our continent.” (CEC 2016, 6)

EEA integrated them into a prayer: “Europe’s challenges are huge. Lord, please be merciful. And help us to step forward as salt and light, to play our part and pointing people to you, the King of Kings” (EEA News, 2).

4.4.4. Vision for Europe

In the end, the vision about the future of Europe shows how convictional organizations embed European integration into a broader worldview involving the striving of the whole humanity.

Resting on their own missions, many convictional lobbying groups want the EU to *realize the common good* (CEC; COMECE; EEA; EHF). CEC and EEA base it on a Christian

understanding without striving for an exclusively Christian society:

“Above all I [CEC President Rt Rev. Christopher Hill] hope the churches – including our partners in the Catholic Church – will be able to revitalize a vision for Europe much broader than the mere economic, a vision informed by a Christian understanding of society which looks to the common good of all, supporting human rights and inclusive communities without collapsing into purely individualistic demands, and understands (from the inside of faith) the need for dialogue between faiths and all people of good will.” (CEC News, 6)

EEA seeks a “Christ-like transformation in Europe” (EEA Website) but compares the role of Christians on the Continent with the one of Israel in Babylon integrated into a diverse surrounding (EEA News, 1). COMECE is not speaking of a particular Christian but rather humanist vision: “It also raises the question on the way to achieve the ‘true European humanism’ to which Pope Francis has encouraged the Europeans in his speech at the Charlemagne Prize Ceremony” (COMECE News, 5). The EHF strives to shape a Europe that “is inclusive, open, just, sustainable, and that works for people of all ages, social backgrounds and nations” (EHF News, 4).

Furthermore, several convictional organizations aspire that the EU *promotes values in the world* (BIC; CEC; COMECE; EHF):

“In the hope that a united Europe can take a stronger role on the world stage, COMECE together with Justice and Peace Europe aims to assist the EU in its vocation to promote global peace and assume its responsibility for supporting sustainable development and social justice across the world.” (COMECE Website)

Correspondingly, they strive to strengthen the EU’s role as a *global player* (BIC; COMECE): “At the same time, the growing interdependence of the community of nations continues to shape Europe’s roles and responsibilities on the global stage, and exerts a profound influence on its internal dynamics” (BIC Website). This involves a responsibility for other peoples in the world:

“Pope John Paul II underlined this by saying that ‘Europe cannot close in on itself. It cannot and must not lose interest in the rest of the world. On the contrary, it must remain fully aware of the fact that other countries, other continents, await its bold initiatives, in order to offer to poorer peoples the means for their growth and social organisation, and to build a more just and fraternal world’ and thus ‘to build peace within its borders and throughout the world’.” (COMECE 2016, 13)

Finally, convictional lobbyists strive towards a *unified Europe* (CEC; COMECE; EEA). Nevertheless, the unification should not rely on an acculturation but involve a cultural and religious diversity:

“The Union as a ‘super state’ is, certainly in the foreseeable future, not feasible, if it would be desirable at all. However, a Europe characterised by, and based on multiple identities would be a good basis for developing joint policies towards common issues, and for a win-win situation for all those involved.” (CEC 2016, 12)

5. Discussion

The previous analyses give insights into the content promoted by convictional lobbying organizations. Whereas the expert interview analysis provides a deeper understanding of convictional lobbying in the EU and the particular self-perception of convictional lobbyists, the analysis of their websites reveal especially their political ambitions and the worldviews they are embedded in. In this chapter, the results of the analyses are linked back to the theoretical assumptions and put in relation to a broader context. Finally, the impact of convictional lobbying to the emergence of a European civil religion is discussed.

5.1. Hypothesis 1: General Promotion of Religious Content

The expert interviews show that convictional organizations like other lobbying groups pursue institutional interests. This is in particular the case when EU legislation touches national law concerning religion. Then, convictional organizations do lobbying activities in order to defend their organizational existence. However, institutional interests are seen as a condition to fulfill other purposes. The major activity of convictional lobbying concerns the promotion of the common good involving both, the promotion of values and the advocacy for third parties. Therefore, it can be concluded that convictional lobbyists promote religious content and hypothesis one – convictional lobbying does not promote religious content – is not confirmed.

Still, there are differences among convictional lobbyists. While Christian representations are well organized and deal with diverse policy issues, the Islam does not have a strong voice on the EU level yet. This result corresponds to secondary literature outlined in chapter 3.4. Nonreligious organizations, although also doing convictional lobbying, do not represent fixed communities. Regarding the complaint of discrimination, the expert interviews do not reveal any unequal treatment. It must be pointed out however that all interviewed experts represent religious organizations.

Asking about the differences of convictional organizations to other lobbying groups further shed light on an important aspect not envisaged by the questionnaire, namely the financing of the lobbying organizations. Three experts highlighted the importance of financial independence guaranteed through voluntary commitment or their member's support. They argued that this enables them to pursue a sovereign political agenda aspiring the common good based on the own worldview. Like this, profit interest and foreign claims can be ignored. However, considering the different organizational degrees of ideologies it is questionable whether all

convictional organizations are working financially completely independent. This point addresses especially the structural differences between religious institutions with organized communities and secular organizations representing rather currents of thoughts. Whereas the former ones can fall back to a secured financing due to a stable membership, the latter ones depend on other kinds of support. Consequently, it raises the question whether convictional lobbying organizations with more financial recourses have higher chances to implement their agendas than the ones with less.

5.2. Hypothesis 2: Promotion of Inconsistent Religious Content

Both, the expert interview analysis and the website analysis show disagreements among convictional lobbying organizations. The most mentioned issues of concern are related to family policy and bioethics. In this regard, EHF emphasizes their humanist views in contrast to what they consider a religious approach. They strongly support sexual freedom and the free choice of all live-related questions and consider it as a basic human right. They further request unlimited research in this area. However, the expert interviews reveal that these controversial issues do not separate a nonreligious from a religious approach but divide the different Christian denominations among each other, or even the Christian communities within one denomination. The content promoted by convictional organizations related to bioethics and family policy is therefore inconsistent.

The discussion about sexual and bioethical questions also touches upon another issue of concern, namely the moral role of the state. According to EHF's view, the EU should not intervene in any personal decision making and should not adopt any particular attitude. It should be completely neutral against any kind of convictional influences. Religion thus is considered as a purely private issue which must be excluded from public debate. Correspondingly, religious lobbying is perceived as a threat to European values. This statement contradicts the perception of religious organizations and even to the concept of convictional lobbying in general. The content related to the role of religion in the EU is inconsistent.

The controversial attitude towards religious influence is also reflected concerning the conceptualization of the whole European integration. Whereas Christian organizations, although committed to religious pluralism, emphasize a cultural Christian heritage which served as a fundament for European values and the willingness to unite, EHF stresses rather authoritarian experiences with Christianity and frames the EU in opposition to it. Thus, the

content promoted regarding Christianity is inconsistent. Representatives of other religions do not take a stand towards the role of Christianity in Europe.

Overall, convictional lobbyists in the EU defend certain contradicting convictions and beliefs concerning family policy, bioethics, Christianity, and the role of religion in the EU. Hence, they promote inconsistent religious content and hypothesis two is confirmed. Nevertheless, if they promote additionally consistent religious content, they still contribute to civil religion construction in the EU.

5.3. Hypothesis 3: Promotion of Consistent Religious Content

The expert interviews showed that convictional lobbyists tend to cooperate with each other, especially within the same religion. Furthermore, they are open-minded to work together and form alliances with representatives of other religions or philosophies. Correspondingly, there are also areas of convergence which find a consensus among convictional lobbying organizations in the EU.

Although different actors disagree on the origin of European values, they do agree on the same values. All of them highlight the importance of peace, solidarity and social justice as well as tolerance and pluralism. Some of them add democracy, environmental protection, and education. Nevertheless, all of these values are already considered in the legal fundament of the EU and do not reflect any new religious content.

Not explicitly mentioned in the legal base of the EU is solidarity with migrants and refugees. Although article 18 CFREU guarantees the right to asylum based on the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 and the articles 67(2) and 78 TFEU strive to develop a common EU policy towards the issue, convictional lobbyists regardless of their religious or philosophical background further emphasize the need for an active European solidarity with all people beyond European borders. They promote an open-minded attitude towards refugees but also migrants in general referring on the one hand to a European responsibility towards people in need and on the other hand to economic and cultural advantages caused by migration. Furthermore, they invite the EU to promote its values in the world and act as a global player in order to fight worldwide poverty.

Consistency is also found concerning the opposition and threats to the EU. All convictional organizations reject national division on the continent. Furthermore, they condemn egoism and

racism. They see it expressed within populism which turns either against the EU or against refugees and migrants or both. Although it seems evident that the EU does not support national division, the prospective exit of Great Britain based on article 50 TEU shows that this is no civil religious consensus. However, convictional organizations consistently frame a moral claim to remain faithful to the European project.

With a view to the future of the EU, convictional organizations aspire the common good in Europe based on European values, cultural diversity, and the rapprochement of nations, cultures, and religions on the continent. The rather vague image does not contain more content than already expressed within the EU's legal base.

In sum, besides the civil religious inventories already established in the EU, convictional lobbying promotes consistent religious content concerning the European attitude towards migrants and refugees, a moral European responsibility in the world, and the rejection of national egoism and division. Hypothesis three thus is confirmed. On the whole, the picture drawn by convictional lobbyists does reveal that European integration is considered as something good and desirable. The EU presents an alternative concept in contradiction to the terrifying history of the continent shaped by wars and oppression. Still, the European project is considered as threatened mainly by nationalism and racism among Europeans. All convictional organizations support the motto of the EU 'united in diversity' and consider cultural and religious pluralism as worthy of protection.

5.4. Discussing the Impact of Convictional Lobbying

In the last part of the interviews, the experts have been asked for their interpretational knowledge. Although this does not affect the results of the analyses, it gives additional insight to the research question. The experts presented a rather disillusioning picture about civil religion in the EU. However, all of them stated that religion and convictional lobbying in particular can contribute to the emergence of a European identity or a civil religion in the EU. They mentioned on the one hand that the cooperation of diverse religions and denominations on the EU level serves as a role model for European rapprochement. On the other hand, religions, and hereby also convictional organizations, are considered as storytelling machines and centers for reflection. They inform their followers and members about EU policy and motivate them to take a stand towards certain EU related issues. The answers of the experts correspond with the results of the analyses.

The analyses have shown that convictional lobbying promotes religious content in the EU and that this religious content further contains a minimum consensus among the organizations. Thus, convictional lobbying does contribute to the emergence of a European civil religion. This happens on two levels. First, convictional lobbying influences EU policy making and hereby the legislative framework as well as the political culture within the EU. Second, convictional organizations educate their members about the EU and inform them about its political debates. Because all organizations share a positive attitude towards European integration, they support the construction of convictions and beliefs binding citizens to the EU. The most common churches have even a say beyond their institutions, namely in health care, social welfare, and education. Therefore, they could work bottom-up by identifying and articulating the basic needs of EU citizens and top-down by promoting political messages, defending the idea of European integration, and motivating people to participate in the elections. Overall, convictional organizations strengthen the popularity of the EU and the EU recognizes their unique contribution in article 17 TFEU.

Furthermore, convictional lobbying compensates criticism concerning lobbying in the EU in general. Chapter 3.1. shows that lobbying is an integral part of EU policy but is often considered as unjust due to the unequal representation of interest. While defending third parties' interest, convictional lobbyists strive to counteract this inequality (Vlieger & Tanasescu 2012, 478). They consider themselves as advocates for the voiceless and invisible people in a society and represent them to the EU. This way, both, the EU and convictional organizations benefit. While the EU increases its legitimacy, convictional organizations project their principals onto European integration and thus confirm their identity as agents for reconciliation and peace (Böllmann 2010, 327).

All this suggests an extensive impact of convictional lobbying in the EU. However, the analyses also revealed inconsistent religious content promoted by convictional lobbyists concerning family policy, bioethics, Christianity, and the role of religion in the EU. The latter point in particular discloses a conflict line separating religious from nonreligious convictional organizations. Whereas religious organizations, as shown, have an interest to support their dialog with EU institutions, EHF aspires to abolish it. This exemplifies its paradoxical self-understanding as convictional lobbying organization lobbying mainly for the removal of convictional lobbying. It raises the question whether nonreligious convictional organizations really practice convictional lobbying.

Unfortunately, no representative of a nonreligious organization approved an interview for this study. Still, lobbyists representing religious lobbying groups confirmed the convictional character of nonreligious organizations. Like religious ones, they represent a particular worldview and according to it, they strive for the common good in Europe. Furthermore, the website analysis showed that EHF relies on a broad spectrum of convictions and beliefs and promotes consistent religious content with other convictional organizations. They even enrich convictional lobbying in the EU by additional values which have not been mentioned by any other religious organization, such as gender equality, sexual freedom and free choice in all life-related questions.

On the other hand, EHF's aim to limit the impact of religions in the EU takes precedence above anything else. Subsequently, its lobbying activities seem comparable to the ones of NGOs focusing on one single individual interest like for example environmental protection. In the case of EHF this would constitute a strict secularity. Furthermore, nonreligious convictional organizations usually do not represent a fixed number of people organized in a community. They rather take up currents of thoughts which might be shared by nonreligious as well as religious people. Although EHF stresses the particular defense of unbeliever's interests, it is questionable whether the majority of them really support its activities and views just because they do not commit to any religion or denomination.

The controversial character of EHF sheds light on a basic problem regarding convictional lobbying in the EU, namely its representative nature. Although all kinds of religions, denominations, and philosophies are invited to contribute to EU policy, the representation of different convictions remains unequal. First, worldviews vary according to their organizational degree and some of them struggle to find a common voice on the EU level. It applies to the Islam due to many diverse denominations on the continent. It is also true for agnostic, atheist, and undecided citizens who do not organize their ideologies in a way religious people do. Second, this also concerns the financing of the organizations. Several experts mentioned the importance of financial independence for implementing a political agenda oriented towards the common good. However, the diverse organizational natures suggest that some actors have more financial recourses than others and it does not necessarily correlate with the amount of Europeans they represent. Third, the European institutions meet separately with churches and religious associations or communities on the one hand, and with philosophical and non-confessional organizations on the other hand. It remains open whether this still guaranties an

equal treatment with the same opportunities to influence policy making.

Finally, convictional lobbying is decisively able to contribute to the emergence of a European civil religion if it captures the views of all EU citizens. Usually, religious organizations strive to compensate the unequal character of lobbying in the EU expressing voiceless and invisible interest. However, the motivation to explicitly provide voice to unbeliever's worldviews can be considered as rather unlikely.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis, the contribution of convictional lobbying in the EU to the emergence of a European civil religion was investigated. In a first step, it was proven that convictional lobbyists promote religious content in the EU. Although convictional organizations, like usual lobbying groups, also defend institutional interest, their main ambition is to strive for the common good.

On this base, the study further focused on the consistency of religious content promoted. It concluded that convictional lobbying promotes both, inconsistent as well as consistent content. Inconsistency was detected for content related to family policy, bioethics, Christianity, and the role of religion in the EU. Consistency was found concerning basic values like peace, social justice, and tolerance. Whereas they are already mentioned in the legal base of the EU and do not represent new religious content, convictional lobbyists further promote solidarity with refugees and migrants, a European responsibility to spread its values and tackle poverty in the world, and the rejection of national division and egoism. Thus, it can be concluded that convictional lobbying in the EU contributes to the emergence of a European civil religion.

In chapter five, the impact of convictional lobbying in the EU was discussed. Because of the moral ambition of convictional organizations as well as their will to defend third parties' interests, the EU concedes them a privileged role as lobbyists. However, the representation of different worldviews is unequal. In particular Christians managed to establish a broad scope of lobbying organizations. Still, the religious landscape in the EU suggests that there is a considerable proportion of citizens not committed to Christianity or any other organized religion. Although there are also secular convictional organizations lobbying to the EU, their number and diversity is relatively small compared to the amount of nonconfessional Europeans. Moreover, convictional lobbying groups differ in terms of their organization, finances, and access to European institutions. Whereas religious institutions representing communities can

rely on a steady membership, philosophical organizations take up rather currents of thoughts and therefore find it more difficult to be representative and to establish an own political agenda. Furthermore, the most salient one, EHF, pursues mainly the abolishment of convictional lobbying. Even though it promotes alternative values – which are not emphasized by any of the analyzed religious organizations like gender equality, sexual freedom, or free choice in live-related questions – and hereby enriches the scope of convictional lobbying to the EU, its destructive lobbying ambition limits the potential convictional lobbying could have. To balance and thus strengthen the contribution of convictional lobbying, it would be important that on the one hand, the EU considers all approaches equally and on the other hand, philosophical organizations focus primarily on constructive lobbying ambitions. Then, convictional lobbying could play a more valuable role in giving meaning to the EU and hereby constructing civil religion.

This study is based on a method triangulation within a qualitative content analysis framework. Whereas an expert interview analysis focused on the self-understanding of convictional lobbyists and their activities, a website analysis deepened into the content promoted and their particular views on the EU. As suggested, expert interviews have been too short for dealing with these thematic issues but websites only informed partly and biased about controversial content promoted such as content concerning family policy or bioethics. Here, the experts gave additional and important information. The two approaches examined two perspectives on the same issue and hereby could complement the research results. However, all of the experts have been representatives of religious organizations. The view of nonreligious representatives would have given a more holistic insight into convictional lobbying on the EU level and its impact on civil religion construction.

An aspect not enlightened with this study is the fact that convictional lobbying organizations do not reflect the whole extent of convictions and beliefs shared by their followers and members. Instead, they solely promote the ones considered as righteous and good by the organizations' elites derived from their ideologies. This also explains the consistently positive attitude towards European integration and the welcoming of migrants and refugees. By evaluating and judging about political issues, convictional organizations tend to shape the conscience and worldview of their supporters. Therefore, this aspect has not been relevant for the research interest of this thesis, namely the contribution of convictional lobbying to emergence of civil religion. For investigating the existence of civil religion in the EU directly,

it is unavoidable to also deal with Eurosceptic convictions and beliefs among EU citizens.

The present thesis made use of civil religion theory to study the impact of convictional lobbying. Accordingly, it did not address the question of the empirical existence of a civil religion in the EU or its particular shape. Still, to link civil religion theory with convictional lobbying in order to not only investigate the goals and activities of convictional lobbyists but also their contribution to the construction of meaning to a political community turned out to be a promising approach. The results show that there is a certain amount of consistent content promoted by diverse religious and philosophical organizations in Europe. It suggests a little exploited potential investigating belonging to a heterogeneous community like the EU on the base of civil religion theory. In comparison to approaches focusing on national identity, civil religion captures diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. The focus on a minimum consensus is not in concurrence to any national belonging and does not separate Europeans from a considered opposition. Instead, the concept integrates diversification on the continent and therefore is auspicious with regard to a growing migration to the EU.

Future research on European civil religion could combine pro-EU and Eurosceptic attitudes. If there is still a minimum consensus of convictions and beliefs concerning European integration, it is a promising sign that a European civil religion already exists. Building on the present research, future investigations could expand the focus to not only study whether convictional organization give meaning to the EU but also what Europeans actually consider as its meaning.

7. Literature

- Abromeit, Heidrun. "Sind die Kirchen Interessensverbände?" In *Die Kirchen und die Politik: Beiträge zu einem ungeklärten Verhältnis*. Edited by Heidrun Abromeit and Göttrik Wewer, 244–60. Wiesbaden: VS, 1989.
- Bellah, Robert. "Religion and legitimation in the American Republic." *Soc* 35, no. 2 (1998): 193–201.
- . "Civil religion in America." *Daedalus* 134, no. 4 (2005): 40–55.
- Benedikter, Roland, and Georg Göschl. "Zur Überwindung der Krise: Europa braucht eine Zivilreligion." *POP* 3, no. 1 (2014).
- Berezenska, Olesia, Anna L. Borgstedt, Cornelia Engelhardt, Patricia Franz, and Eva-Maria Kocher. "Europe - A Collective Identity?" In *Cultural identities in Europe: Nations and regions, migration and minorities*. Edited by Verena Gutsche and Richard Nate, 19–36. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2014.
- Böckenförde, Ernst-Wolfgang. *Staat, Gesellschaft, Freiheit: Studien zur Staatstheorie und zum Verfassungsrecht*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976.
- Böllmann, Friederike. *Organisation und Legitimation der Interessen von Religionsgemeinschaften in der europäischen politischen Öffentlichkeit: Eine quantitativ-qualitative Analyse von Europäisierung als Lernprozess in Religionsorganisationen*. Würzburg: Ergon-Verl., 2010.
- Bourne, Angela. "European Identity: Conflict and Cooperation." In *Research methods in European Union studies*. Edited by Kennet Lynggaard, 55–71. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Christmann, Gabriela B. "Telefonische Experteninterviews - ein schwieriges Unterfangen." In *Experteninterviews: Theorien, Methoden, Anwendungsfelder*. Edited by Alexander Bogner, Beate Littig and Wolfgang Menz. 3rd ed., 197–222. Wiesbaden: VS, 2009.
- Cimino, Richard, and Christopher Smith. "Secular Humanism and Atheism beyond Progressive Secularism." *Sociology of Religion* 68, no. 4 (2007): 407–424.
- Davie, Grace. *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without belonging*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.
- . "Global Civil Religion: A European Perspective." *Sociology of Religion* 62, no. 4 (2001): 455.
- Davies, Norman. *Europe East and West*. London: Cape, 2006.
- European Commission. *Green Paper. European Transparency Initiative: COM (2006) 194 final*, 2006. http://europa.eu/documents/comm/green_papers/pdf/com2006_194_en.pdf (accessed March 3, 2017).
- ed. *Biotechnology: Report. 73.1. Special Eurobarometer*, 2010.
- ed. *Discrimination in the EU in 2012: Report. 393. Special Eurobarometer*, 2012.
- ed. *Institutional Agreement on a mandatory Transparency Register: COM (2016) 627 final*, 2016. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52016PC0627> (accessed March 3, 2017).
- ed. "Transparency Register.", 2017a.

- <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do?locale=en#en> (accessed March 15, 2017).
- ed. *Dialogue with churches, religious associations or communities and philosophical and non-confessional organisations*, 2017. http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=50189 (accessed July 12, 2017).
- Flick, Uwe. *Triangulation: Eine Einführung*. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: VS, 2008.
- Grzymała-Busse, Anna M. *Nations under God: How churches use moral authority to influence policy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Heinig, Michael. “Zivilreligiöse Grundierung europäischer Religionspolitik.” In *Religionspolitik und Zivilreligion*. Edited by Rolf Schieder. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2001.
- Hildebrandt, Mathias. *Politische Kultur und Zivilreligion*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1996.
- ed. “Bedarf die Europäische Union einer Zivilreligion?” In *Politik und Religion in der Europäischen Union*. Edited by Hartmut Behr, 429–50. Wiesbaden: VS, 2006.
- Hogebrink, Laurens. “Europe's Heart and Soul: Jacques Delors' Appeal to the Churches”. http://www.globethics.net/documents/4289936/17575651/GE_CEC_2_web.pdf/9f959b11-9a1a-4c8c-a213-fd8156cef009 (accessed March 3, 2017).
- Houston, Kenneth. “Church-EU Dialogue under Article 17.3: Consensus-Seeking Instrument or Power Strategy?” *Politics and Religion* 7, no. 1 (2014): 148–176.
- Joos, Klemens. *Lobbying im neuen Europa: Erfolgreiche Interessenvertretung nach dem Vertrag von Lissabon*. Weinheim: Wiley-VCH, 2011.
- Kettell, Steven. “Divided We Stand: The Politics of the Atheist Movement in the United States.” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 29, no. 3 (2014): 377–391.
- Kleger, Heinz. *Gibt es eine europäische Zivilreligion? Pariser Vorlesung über die Werte Europas*. Potsdam: Univ.-Verl., 2008.
- Kleger, Heinz, and Alois Müller. “Einleitung: Bürgerliche Religion, Religion des Bürgers, politische Religion, Zivilreligion, Staatsreligion, Kulturreligio.” In *Religion des Bürgers: Zivilreligion in Amerika und Europa*. Edited by Heinz Kleger. 2nd ed., 7–18. München: Kaiser, 2004.
- Kleinfeld, Ralf, Ulrich Willems, and Annette Zimmer. “Lobbyismus und Verbändeforschung: Eine Einleitung.” In *Lobbying: Strukturen, Akteure, Strategien*. Edited by Ralf Kleinfeld, 7–35. Wiesbaden: VS, 2007.
- Könemann, Judith, Anna-Maria Meuth, Christiane Frantz, and Max Schulte. *Religiöse Interessenvertretung: Kirchen in der Öffentlichkeit; Christen in der Politik*. Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2015.
- Laudrup, Carin. “A European Battlefield: Does the EU Have a Soul? Is Religion In or Out of Place in the European Union?” *Religion, State and Society* 37, no. 1-2 (2009): 51–63.
- Lee, Lois. *Recognizing the non-religious: Reimagining the secular*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Leif, Thomas, and Rudolf Speth. “Die fünfte Gewalt - Anatomie des Lobbyismus in Deutschland.” In *Die fünfte Gewalt: Lobbyismus in Deutschland*. Edited by Thomas Leif, 10–37. Wiesbaden: VS, 2006.

- Leuştean, Lucian. "Does God matter in the European Union?" In *Representing religion in the European Union: Does God matter?* Edited by Lucian Leuştean, 1–32. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Liedhegener, Antonius, and Anastas Odermatt. "Religionszugehörigkeit in Europa – empirisch. Die „Swiss Metadatabase of Religious Affiliation in Europe (SMRE).“ In *Europa mit oder ohne Religion? Der Beitrag der Religion zum gegenwärtigen und künftigen Europa*. Edited by Kurt Appel, 121–72. Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2014.
- Lübbe, Hermann. "Staat und Zivilreligion : ein Aspekt politischer Legitimität." In *Religion des Bürgers: Zivilreligion in Amerika und Europa*. Edited by Heinz Klegler. 2nd ed., 195–220. München: Kaiser, 2004.
- . *Zivilisationsdynamik: Ernüchterter Fortschritt politisch und kulturell*. Basel: Schwabe, 2014.
- Luhmann, Niklas. "Grundwerte der Zivilreligion: zur wissenschaftlichen Karriere eines Themas." In *Religion des Bürgers: Zivilreligion in Amerika und Europa*. Edited by Heinz Klegler. 2nd ed., 175–94. München: Kaiser, 2004.
- Madeley, John T. "Deus ex machina: representing God on the stage of the European Union." In *Representing religion in the European Union: Does God matter?* Edited by Lucian Leuştean, 47–59. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Mandry, Christof. "Die Frage nach der Identität der EU und die Religion(en)." In *Religionsproduktivität in Europa: Markierungen im religiösen Feld*. Edited by Jarnal Malik, 11–28. Münster: Aschendorff, 2009.
- Mayring, Philipp. *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken*. 12th ed. Weinheim: Beltz, 2015.
- McCrea, Ronan. "Religious contributions to law- and policy-making in a secular political order: the approach of European institutions." In *Representing religion in the European Union: Does God matter?* Edited by Lucian Leuştean. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Meuser, Michael, and Ulrike Nagel. "Das Experteninterview — konzeptionelle Grundlagen und methodische Anlage." In *Methoden der vergleichenden Politik- und Sozialwissenschaft: Neue Entwicklungen und Anwendungen*. Edited by Susanne Pickel, 465–79. Wiesbaden: VS, 2009.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. *Politische Theologie - politische Ethik*. München: Kaiser, 1984.
- Nix, Andreas. *Zivilreligion und Aufklärung: Der zivilreligiöse Strang der Aufklärung und die Frage nach einer europäischen Zivilreligion*. Berlin: LIT, 2012.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. "Civil Religion? Religionsfreiheit und pluralistischer Staat: Das theologische Fundament der Gesellschaft." In *Die religiöse Dimension der Gesellschaft: Religion u. ihre Theorien*. Edited by Peter Koslowski, 63–76. Tübingen: Mohr, 1985.
- Pickel, Gert. "Die Verbindung religiöser und politischer Orientierungen im europäischen Staatenvergleich: Basis einer europäischen Sozialkultur?" In *Politik und Religion in der Europäischen Union*. Edited by Hartmut Behr, 451–79. Wiesbaden: VS, 2006.
- . *Religionssoziologie: Eine Einführung in zentrale Themenbereiche*. Wiesbaden: VS, 2011.

- Pickel, Gert, and Susanne Pickel "Qualitative Interviews als Verfahren des Ländervergleichs." In *Methoden der vergleichenden Politik- und Sozialwissenschaft: Neue Entwicklungen und Anwendungen*. Edited by Susanne Pickel, 441–64. Wiesbaden: VS, 2009.
- . *Politische Kultur- und Demokratieforschung. Grundbegriffe, Theorien, Methoden. Eine Einführung*. Wiesbaden: VS, 2006.
- Pickel, Gert, and Kornelia Sammet. *Einführung in die Methoden der sozialwissenschaftlichen Religionsforschung*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2014.
- Pollock, David. "Article 17: reason for concern." In *Representing religion in the European Union: Does God matter?* Edited by Lucian Leuştean, 122–36. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Richardson, Herbert. "Civil Religion in Theological Perspective." In *American civil religion*, edited by Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones, 161–84. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Der Gesellschaftsvertrag*. 3rd ed. Leipzig: Reclam, 1978.
- Schieder, Rolf. *Civil Religion: Die religiöse Dimension der politischen Kultur*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verl.-Haus Mohn, 1987.
- van Schendelen, Rinus. *The art of lobbying the EU: More Machiavelli in Brussels*. 4th ed. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013.
- . "Brüssel: Die Champions League des Lobbying." In *Die fünfte Gewalt: Lobbyismus in Deutschland*. Edited by Thomas Leif, 132–63. Wiesbaden: VS, 2006.
- Vlieger, Pieterjan de, and Irina Tanasescu. "Changing Forms of Interactions between the European Commission and Interest Groups: The Case of Religious Lobbying." *Journal of European Integration* 34, no. 5 (2012): 447–463.

8. Annex

8.1. Expert Interview Analysis

Generalization of the codes	Coding	Doc	Sec
Chapter 4.3.1. Promotion of Religious Content			
<i>difference to non-convictional lobbyists</i>	E1: Well, one difference with the companies is of course that we are not a 'for-profit organization'. Our finances rely on fees from our members and revenue from our own activities.	E 1	18
- Non-profit organizations (E1, 18; E2, 15; E3, 10-11)	But the philosophy of self-understanding of our organization would not differ so much from other civil society organizations. What sets us apart from many other players is that we are truly a representative body and a member body of member bodies, so our members have members themselves who are representatives of [denominational] movements within their nations. So, we can safely say that we do represent the people we represent, whereas other NGOs tend to represent only their members or only the issue that they work on.	E 1	18
- Represent their members (worldviews) (E1, 18)	So, that would be a main difference and that's also one of the reasons why the EU considers that the role of organized religion is so significant, because it does represent an entire section of society, individuals, certain kind of thinking and format in the society as well.	E 1	19
- Represent entire section of society (E1, 19)	I: I would also like to know what distinguishes you, a representative from a religious institution, from other types of interest representatives in the EU like for example companies or NGOs?	E 2	14-15
- Advocacy work for third parties and promotion of the common good (E3, 10-11)	E2: First of all, the good thing is that we are volunteers. Each of us does voluntary support with our money, with our time. This is very important. This means that we have no support from the government or any kind of association, any kind of thinking. This gives us the opportunity to be nothing like a flag. I: I would also like to know what distinguishes you, a representative of a religious institution, from other types of interest representatives in the EU such as companies or NGOs or think tanks? E3: As I said we are doing a lot of advocacy work for groups who don't have a lobby office here because they are marginalized and in general I would say we work for the common good. So, there is no financial interest behind our advocacy work. There is no sort of hidden agenda or compared to other organizations not only one interest focus but it's quite a broad focus.	E 3	9-11
<i>convictional lobbying in general</i>	I was invited as a representation of the [organization], so of course I can tell you that it's important for the European institutions to listen directly from ourselves what is our necessity and how we can work together to prevent a clash not only of the civilization but also of all religions, especially in this particular moment.	E 2	4
- Important for the EU concerning current religious affairs (E2, 4; E4, 36)	But we are facing another problem which is the level of religious illiteracy in public institutions in Europe, a lack of understanding of religion and a kind of fear because of secularization. There is a misunderstanding that religions cannot really play a role. And that's a wide spread understanding. The fact is, I can see it first hand that when I meet officials from the European Commission, they understand that religious organizations have a strong inspiring power and the institutions lack this inspiring power.	E 1	72
- Religions have inspiring power lacking in the EU (E1, 72)	but I mean the whole issue of religion now, I think it comes really up because of the... how to phrase it now in a correct way... of the Ratlosigkeit... the discussion about how do we integrate in our societies and in Europe the Islam and Muslim communities in the right way. All countries have certain problems there, like France, like Germany, and others. Of course, because of all the attacks which had a certain Islamist terrorist background. Of course, it's not the Islam, but the people are related to a certain Islamic background. Of course,	E 4	36
- Religious illiteracy in the EU (E1, 72)			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religion is not important in EU (E4, 37) 	there is the question now more coming up in the institutions, how do we deal with this kind of phenomenon?		
	I mean you have to see that in the center of the EU is still the internal market and the free movement of people, the free movement of goods, the free movement of money. That is what the EU is very much about. That is not about religions and churches and so on.	E 4	37
<p><i>promote third parties' interest</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representing weak and marginalized people, especially refugees (E1, 12-14; E3, 5,11) 	<p>But another one for instance is our engagement with refugee issues so we launched a couple of years ago a campaign which is now called the 'refugee campaign' and my role, one of my roles in that campaign is to help the 20 million [denomination's followers] across Europe understand what the EU says about it or what is happening all over Europe and also represent the voice of these people in the European institutions when it comes to legislation, or agreements.</p> <p>I: The voice of the refugees right now?</p> <p>E1: Yes. Yes, actually the voice of [denomination's followers] with regard to refugee issues which includes representing the refugees for those who work with the refugees.</p>	E 1	12-14
	but over the years this sort of priority has also a bit shifted because the EU gained more and more competences. It is not only the internal market anymore but also the asylum area. The EU did a lot of legislation also in the social field and the church also very much sees itself as an advocate for groups not having an own lobby organization in Brussels like refugees, like people who are socially marginalized. So, we really do a lot of advocacy work, for example on the area of asylum and migration law when it comes to creating a social dimension of Europe.	E 3	5
	E3: As I said we are doing a lot of advocacy work for groups who don't have a lobby office here because they are marginalized and in general I would say we work for the common good.	E 3	11
<p><i>inform members</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide information about EU policy (E1, 6,10,12) 	our role is also to provide information about debates, relevant debates to our membership	E 1	6
	The Brussel's office itself was founded in 1994 with a due to provide understanding to [denomination's followers] across Europe about developments within the EU but also providing a voice to [denomination's followers] within the development of the European policy to prepare on certain debates.	E 1	10
	But another one for instance is our engagement with refugee issues so we launched a couple of years ago a campaign which is now called the 'refugee campaign' and my role, one of my roles in that campaign is to help the 20 million [denomination's followers] across Europe understand what the EU says about it or what is happening all over Europe and also represent the voice of these people in the European institutions when it comes to legislation, or agreements.	E 1	12
<p><i>promote institutional interest</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 on a scale from 1 (institutional interest) to 5 (common good) (E1, 56; E4, 11) 	Well, the organization itself was founded in 1846 so 170 years ago and back than the idea that providing together a joint voice or joint representation of the Christian worldview as understood and experienced by [denomination's followers] was something of value.	E 1	10
	<p>I: The [organization] on a scale, if there is a scale from 1 to 5 and 1 stands for institutional interest or interest of your member organizations and 5 would be general goals and the common good, where would you position the [organization]?</p> <p>E1: Probably at 4. I think we would specifically address the interest of [denomination] only if there is a specific case that is especially concerning to</p>	E 1	55

- Tackle discrimination, Islamophobia (E2, 6)	the [denominational] public.		
- When legislation touches church's rights in member states (E3, 4; E4, 8-9)	E2: Yes, we have 3 main goals. First of all is to have a strong link with not-Muslims, because Islamophobia is increasing. Many people confuse migrants with terrorists, and with Muslims. Of course, Islam is not equivalent with Jihad, with terrorism, because we want that our new Muslims study, that they read Islam, that they read a religion of peace and we teach them not to go to the internet to learn religion but to get the sources directly from the main books. So this is very important.	E 2	6
- Institutional interest is a prerequisite for other goals (E3, 12-15)	I: Why is it important to represent the [organization] to the EU? E3: The decision was already taken 27 years ago in the 90s because of EU legislation basically, which is affecting also the church's autonomy and as you know, the church in [country] is also a big employer and it is sort of profiting also from the state-church constellations allowing a right for self-determination for the churches in many areas and at that time there was a debate about the data protection directive and it turned out that also this sort of legislation directive from the EU can affect the churches and therefore it was seen as a need to be present in order to give the argumentation about a specific also constitutional status of the churches in [country].	E 3	3-4
	I: In the beginning, you mentioned institutional interest of the [organization] concerning data protection and now you talk also about general goals. If there is a scale from 1, institutional interest to 5, general goals, where would you position the [organization] on the content you promote? E3: The institutional interest are as important as the general interest. I: So, you say both is the same important? E3: Yes. Because the institutional interest are a sort of prerequisite for the other work we are doing. So, if the church had not the autonomy granted also from the German constitutional law but also by European law, by article 17 TFEU, they could not do their social work, they could not do their advocacy work. So, it is a prerequisite to have this autonomy in order to also be present in other areas of society. So, it's very strongly interlinked.	E 3	12-15
	I: But still the [organization] is representing people with a specific religious background. Do you also have institutional interests, the interests of exactly these people, or is it only concerning the common good? E4: Well, that is nearly now a philosophical question because one could always try to argue that even if you debate institutional issues you can have an approach on the common good.	E 4	7-8
	It's true that of course also the churches ask about developments in Europe concerning also their own organizational live. For instance, just to give you an example, you know probably the article 17 TEU? When it came to the discussion about this treaty which was first a discussion about a possible constitution for the EU, churches all over Europe were very much in favor of this article 17 because they have said it is important that they say already in the first paragraph of this article that the EU has no competence to deal with state-religion, state-church relation on the ground. Because this state-religion and state-church relation is so different in Europe, because of the history, because of the culture. Therefore, we do not want the EU institutions have the competence to do law or legislation about that. If you look to Scandinavia, the church of Sweden, if you look to France, if you look to Germany, it's so different and we want to keep these differences in Europe. If you want that is an example where we as churches and the churches we represent said 'that is about our own live as churches in Europe'. But of course, we would argue that at the end this is also, if you look to the principal of subsidiarity, this is also something where you can argue that it is also about the common good in Europe.	E 4	8-9

	E4: I think then you can give a pretty 4 for that. If you look on our website, you will find somewhere a work program until 2018 because then we have our next assembly. This is the highest legislative body for our organization. Than we give us always a road map for the next years about what we want to do. If you look at that you will find several areas of our work like human rights, peace building, economic justice, employment, bioethics, education, migration of course, and then the last one is about EU policy and legislation. So, we have this area where we think about what does Europe mean also for us as churches, as organizations, as institutions but all the other areas are more advocacy work. Therefore, I think one can argue and really truthfully say that the 4 in this answer to your question 1 to 5 is correct and when you see also how we put human recourses in this work I think it's correct to say it's 4.	E 4	11
<i>promote common good</i>	This is purely my perspective on this but I think that a good number of religious organizations tend to work for the common good. There is of course, I believe a legitimate, a degree of defending their own interest or representing their own interest. But in several areas of policy they tend to take a common good approach.	E 1	54
- Convictional lobbyists promote common good (E1, 54; E2, 25; E3, 11; E4, 6)	I mean if I can tell you a story. I told you the [organization] as a movement was founded in 1846. It was in London and, by the way, the Americans were kicked out back in those days, because some American [denomination's followers] still supported slavery, so they were told they could not join the [organization]. In the 1850s a campaign for religious freedom was launched. This campaign was provoked by the fact that the Swedish government at that time had decided to deport or expel a group of Swedish women who had converted from Lutheranism to Catholicism. The [organization], and that was a very first ort of public policy campaign of the [organization], decided to send a delegation to the Prussian ambassador in Sweden to ask him to advocate for religious freedom for these women. At that time, you could not become a Catholic and remain a Swedish citizen. The campaign was to protect these women who had converted to Catholicism, not to [denomination] clearly, for the religious freedom of a group, which is not your group.	E 1	57-59
- Defend general values are more important than own interest (E1, 57-59; E2, 15)	I: So, the virtue of religious freedom is more important than the own religious interest or the interest of the own group? E1: Yes.		
- Taking an active role to achieving good for Europe (E2, 7)	The second is to establish a link, a strong relation with the institutions and with the Vatican, with Christian organizations and religious leaders. This is important, because we don't want only to be a passive actors or stakeholders but we want to be in the process of stabilization of Europe, to be active actors in this panorama, in this context that is of course very different.	E 2	7
	We are really struggling for peace, we are struggling to support the Christians, because it is our aim to support also the Christians when they escape from Muslims. This is I think a completely new idea, a completely new concept we really practice with a lot of efforts. Then of course, I don't want to say we are better than the others. We just are different.	E 2	15
	We are actually not involved in politics, because it is really our aim not to be involved in politics but into diplomacy, because in politics you are with one party against the other. No, no, we are with all the politicians. We are with all the people. Our enemy is no one. Our enemy is the war, the terrorism. We are not involved in politics. This is it not at all. In diplomacy, yes.	E 2	25
	E3: As I said we are doing a lot of advocacy work for groups who don't have a lobby office here because they are marginalized and in general I would say we work for the common good.	E 3	11
	I: I would also like to know what distinguishes you, a representative of a religious institution, from other types of interest representatives in the EU, such as companies or NGOs? I mean what is interesting is that sometimes civil servants in the institutions, in the European Commission, also sometimes deputies in the EU Parliament say	E 4	5-6

	that the interesting point of the churches is that, of course they are arguing for specific areas, but they are coming from a perspective asking for the common good in Europe. So, they are not only thinking about this or that specific question but they try to formulate something like a vision of a common good in Europe. That might be a difference to other lobby groups. Not to all of them of course, but to some of them, or many of them even.		
Chapter 4.3.2. Differences among Convictional Lobbyists			
<i>Christian representation</i>	E1: I Know that this self-understanding is not universal and is not across the board. The [organization] or [denomination's followers] would see themselves as part of civil society. If you had to interview with COMECE for example, they would not have the same answer. They belief that because they represent the church, or a church, they have a distinctly different nature which we can understand but seen from a purely legal standpoints it's hard, it's a hard case to make. So, we would see ourselves as a movement within civil society, distinct but part of civil society.	E 1	20
- Difference between denominations about being part of civil society (E1, 20)			
- Christian organizations working close together (E3, 20)	I would say CEC and COMECE, the two organizations you named and then many other Christian organizations like Caritas or Jesuit refugee service. So, those who have been long established here. We work very close together except for some minor differences but we have basically the same approach.	E 3	20
<i>Jewish representation</i>	I would say the Jewish organizations are special in their kind, because you have religious Jewish organizations and secular Jewish organizations	E 1	30-32
- Religious (more institutional interest) and secular (more universal approach) Jewish organizations (E1, 20)	I: Do you mean political ones, representing the interest of Israel? E1: No, not necessarily Israel. No, but the interest of Jews in Europe and Jewish people. The secular Jewish organizations would indeed have less an insistence on Israel and would tackle issues more from a universalist point of view. It's a bit more humanistic. The confessional religious Jewish organizations will work a bit more on things like antisemitism or religious freedom for Jewish people. And, indeed, talk a bit more about Israel, the perception of Israel. That's the difference I see among the Jews.		
- No broad outlook on EU affairs (E3, 18)	When it comes to Jewish representatives, there are many organizations in Brussels but they do not have the broad outlook on EU affairs as we do. So, they do not work for example on the common EU asylum system or on the European pillar of social rights to name some examples of our current work.	E 3	18
<i>Muslim representation</i>	Muslims, I have to say, tend to have a quite weak representation in the European institutions. There has been quite a lot of work on Islamophobia in the last two years but that hasn't been really followed up. So, I don't see many Muslim representatives to the meetings I go to.	E 1	33-35
- Weak representation in the EU (E1, 33; E3, 17)	I: Might it's be possible that they cannot organize a common voice? There are too many different denominations ?		
- No common voice (E1, 34-35; E3, 17)	E1: Yes, that's for sure, that's my analyses. I think there is partly a sociological explanation to that, because of the socio-economic make-up of the Muslims in Europe who tend to be lower class and middle class. A lot of them came as low skilled workers in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. The self-organization of the movement has been made more difficult because of that. Also, Islam in Europe is heavily influences by cultures from outside of Europe. So, the Asian Muslims, and the Arab Muslims, and the Turkish Muslims, and the African Muslims do not have the same kind of approach. So even Arabs from North Africa and Arabs from the Middle East are not the same. That also makes it more difficult.		
- Communities are organized differently (E3 17; E4, 14)			
- Focus of own Muslim organization not on EU policy (E2, 21, 25)	We are very active everywhere but on a European level we are waiting for this ambassador that belongs to the government of the European country	E 2	21
	We are actually not involved in politics, because it is really our aim not to be involved in politics but into diplomacy, because in politics you are with one party against the other. No, no, we are with all the politicians. We are with all	E 2	25

	the people. Our enemy is no one. Our enemy is the war, the terrorism. We are not involved in politics. This is it not at all. In diplomacy, yes.		
	E3: In Brussels unfortunately other religions, especially the Muslims, are not organized in a way the churches are. There is no European Muslim representation for example. Which is understandable, because there is not one Islam but there are different confessions in the Islam as well and it's very manifold.	E 3	17
	But you have to have in mind, and that's the same experience like in Germany, it's the same on the European area, for instance to find advocies and partners on the Muslim community is not easy because the structure or the way of organization is very different in that area.	E 4	14
<i>Philosophic representation</i>	I: There are also organizations, I mentioned before, secular organizations representing non-believers interest. Would you consider them as something comparable to religious organizations?	E 1	51-52
- Represent a worldview and strive common good like religions (E1, 5; E4, 25-26)	E1: I would say 'Yes' and 'No'. Yes, in so far as they represent a worldview or a set of worldviews and knowing so far as they tend to not really represent communities. They tend to represent currents of opinion or currents of virtues in a society but no really communities. That's a difference. I mean it's the fact, recognizing God or not recognizing God is not even an issue.		
- Don't have communities like religions (E1, 52; E3, 28)	I: Sometimes they are complaining that the EU prefers to communicate with religious organizations and does not sufficiently consider non-believers in the EU. Would you share this impression?	E 3	25-26
- Are not disadvantaged (E3, 26; E4, 35-37)	E3: No. Also, when you see, even now under the Juncker Commission there is a high-level dialog and it is always one with religious representatives and one with humanists and freemasons. Then there are also many bilateral meetings, there is a contact person in the Parliament and a contact person in the Commission and as far as I understand their work they are very careful to be not only in touch with religious representatives but also with representatives of non-religious organizations. I think it is a very common criticism which I have been hearing a lot but I cannot see that it is really justified and this is a bit a pity, because I think the humanists could be much more content wise engaged and it's a pity when all their contributions are focusing on being discriminated which I don't see is the point. It has maybe also to do with the representability of their organizations when it comes to members.		
- Are not working constructively (E3, 30)	I: Because they don't really have members, like the churches have members?	E 3	27-28
	E3: Of course, they can say everybody who is a non-believer is our member but that's not the same. While the churches have a very clear system where you can see whether they are speaking for one million people or 20 million and I think this also makes a difference.		
	I: Besides the members would you see any more differences between both of the groups?	E 3	29-30
	E3: Well, once are founding their work on the Bible and on Christ and the others don't relate their work to any higher being.		
	Here in Brussels I felt very often I felt that... for example when there was the debate about a constitution for Europe I think that the churches have been very pro-European and really voiced they engagement very much while I really feel that on EU level, I cannot say on member state level, maybe it's different, but the humanists were not very constructive let's say.	E 3	30
	I: Would you say that they also promote the common good in a way?	E 4	25-26
	E4: I think from their perspective yes.		
	I: Yes, definitely. So you mentioned that the EU is cooperating especially with CEC and with COMECE and sometimes for example secular organizations are complaining. Do you also have the impression that the EU prefers to represent the interest of religious people in Europe on the disadvantage of non-religious people?	E 4	34-35
	E4: No, not at all. I mean first of all it is still that, for our perception and I think		

	if you go to lawyers who know something about European institutions, I think they would underline this, too. The whole concept of the European institutions, how they work, from the history also, it is very much driven by the French culture. It is very clear that religion and church from the start is more the private sector. I mean also the article 17 was the first time in the history of the treaties where churches and religions have been even mentioned. So, there is a certain development		
	But I think it would be not true, or not the right perspective to say that the institutions care a lot about churches and religions and about non-religions the do not care.	E 4	37
Chapter 4.3.3. Cooperation and Conflicts among Convictional Lobbyists			
<i>low cooperation</i>	E3: In Brussels, unfortunately other religions, especially the Muslims, are not organized in a way the churches are. There is no European Muslim representation for example. Which is understandable, because there is not one Islam but there are different confessions in the Islam as well and it's very manifold. Therefore, unfortunately we don't have the same cooperation possibilities with Muslims.	E 3	17
- Due to little representation of other religions (E3, 17; E4, 14,18)			
- Due to working on different issues (E3, 22)	I: There are also secular organizations with philosophical backgrounds not necessarily religious like the Humanist Federation. Do you also form alliances with this kind of organizations? E3: We are also members of secular platforms, for example there is a platform about asylum and migration and there is also a French organization ran by the humanists which is working on Human Rights. Both organizations we are members on this ?EPAMP? and there we are working also on the asylum agenda. I think in this regard there is a good cooperation but apart from that, as far as I see the EHF is also not so much into all these subjects as we are. We have never been approached to cooperate so therefore there is also no cooperation.	E 3	21-22
- Due to not being constructive (E3,30)			
	Here in Brussels I felt very often I felt that... for example when there was the debate about a constitution for Europe I think that the churches have been very pro-European and really voiced their engagement very much while I really feel that on EU level, I cannot say on member state level, maybe it's different, but the humanists were not very constructive let's say.	E 3	30
	We are looking also more and more for, let's say not cooperation but also exchange and then also cooperation with other religions.	E 4	14
	Another example would be, perhaps you have seen, we are also part of the European Sunday Alliance where also trade unions and others are members. So, that is a very specific work. There also we are now more and more looking to get partners also in the Jewish and in the Muslim area but as I said that is not so easy, we have to develop it.	E 4	18
<i>conflicting content</i>	I: Another question would be: are there any conflicts between religious organizations, like a conflict line going through the different representatives? E1: Yes, perhaps not conflicts but certainly disagreements or unwillingness to work together on certain issues.	E 1	36-37
- Differences among Christians regarding family policy and bioethics (E1, 39; E3, 20)	Catholics and Protestants do not have the same approach on family policy depending on the Protestant confession of course but CEC and COMECE tend not to work together on such issues, there are doctrinal differences, whereas the East Orthodox, the Catholics and the Evangelicals tend to have a more similar approach. So, that's one example.	E 1	39
- Differences inside Christian communities concerning family policy	And issues related to bioethics are sometimes a source of disagreements among Christian organizations. I mean, if you're one on the scope, there are even more areas of disagreement, but also strong areas of convergence. I mean there are nowadays more and more also Evangelical organizations coming from United States which have a very strong agenda which is very much focused on being critical towards abortion rights, being critical about LGBTQ rights and being critical towards Muslims. So, this is not out agenda.	E 1 E 3	39 20

<p>and bioethics (E4, 31-33)</p> <p>- Differences among religions and secular organizations about the role of religion in a society (E4, 26-28)</p>	So, we don't share this		
	I think we will have a certain, with some groups of them, we will have a certain concern or let's say debate and hot discussion about the concept of how the political sphere can relate and has to relate also to religion, church and so on, in their perspective and in our perspective.	E 4	26
	E4: I mean to put it a little bit differently, to make it really clear. I mean there is a certain tradition and culture to say that religion is a private issue and it has to be a private issue and it has not to play a role in the public sphere, in the political sphere. To make a very clear distinction and separation between these two areas. I think we, the churches and religions, would phrase it in a different way. From the Christian perspective, I would say also the Catholic Church would agree on that, we say of course there should be and must be a clear distinction between the political and the religious or church area which does not mean that there aren't discussions, and necessary discussions and exchanges between these fields. This is needed. Like we have it in Germany and other countries. I think in this question of conceptualization there is a clear difference between humanist's and also freemason's point of views and the point of views of churches and religions.	E 4	28
	I: I was wondering about thematic fields. For example, bioethics or family policy were fields other representatives mentioned. E4: Ahja. That's interesting because I would say from my point of view 'no'. I also had in mind this bioethics and family issues but I mean seriously and honestly and openly spoken: if you look into the Protestant world - and I'm very much deep into this world and I know a little bit about that - if you go to the question of Euthanasia for instance and if you go into the area of reproductive medicine you will have in the Protestant world, I do not speak now about the Orthodox and Catholic, but in the Protestant world you will still have all kind of different answers to ethical questions and family issues. As you know in Germany and also in other churches now you have the blessing of homosexual partnerships. I think one could not say that for all churches and religions there is a clear cut and division to philosophical or non-confessional approaches on these kind of questions.	E 4	30-31
	E4: Well, you know the problem is that - you have a lot of problems about that, that's true - but it's going somehow through the churches. Inside of the churches you have this kind of discussions, even in the Orthodox churches and also in the Catholic Church. I mean even the Pope has done a slightly different wording about homosexual partners some month ago and of course there was a broad debate than in the Catholic Church. Inside of the church you have a different understanding. That is also true for the Protestant churches. You cannot point out to one church and say 'They are of this opinion or that opinion on that issue, it's totally clear'. No, there is a certain division and ongoing discussion of this kind of issues inside of the churches. The Protestant are somehow of the most.. yeah .. advanced ones to some extent but also there... Here in Belgium for the moment, you have a hot debate inside of the church. It's a very small and tiny church but they really have a hot debate on this issue. Division is perhaps not the right word but you have a debate inside of the churches. Does it help?	E 4	33
<p><i>consistent content</i></p> <p>- Convergence concerning several goals (E1, 29-30,41; E3, 19-20; E4, 22)</p>	I: And in general, would you say that religious organizations have comparable interest or promote comparable content to the EU?	E 1	29-30
	E1: You mean between themselves? That's an interesting question. In my understanding, generally yes even though I must say that the confessions of the organization tend to dictate the type of approach the organization has to the EU and the type of issues the organization would be working on.		
	I: Which are the areas of convergence? E1: Social rights, the fight against poverty, the protection of migrants and weak people, the protection of children, freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion or belief, environmental issues. There is a lot of agreement	E 1	40-41

	around these issues.		
	I: Ok, and regarding the religions or confessions who are active in EU policy, would you say that you promote comparable interest or comparable goals? E3: Yes, generally yes.	E 3	19-20
	E4: I mean I could try to answer to that but of course we have also to see to become not superficial there because I mean I think that there are certain points where we are very close to one another. The question for peace for instance or living together in a peaceful way and neighborhood. There is also the question of religious freedom for all religions in Europe but also beyond Europe. The question about how do the European Institutions promote religious freedom elsewhere in the world.	E 4	22
<i>general cooperation</i> - Convictional lobbyists generally cooperate with everybody (E1, 26-28; E2, 23,26-28)	I mean we founded about 10 years ago a platform in Brussel's called 'The European platform against religious intolerance and discrimination' and it was founded by 3 [denominational] organizations, but from the start we wanted it to be open and today it includes Buddhist representation, a Jewish organization, a secular organization, a Mormon organization, a Bahai organization. So, it's a very, very ... The top of the lines, we tend to vary according to the interest or issue that we are working on.	E 1	26
	I: Would you also cooperate with secular organizations? You mentioned already, they are also part of this union, like for example the humanists which do not prefer religion entering politics. E1: Yes, actually, we have this philosophy we are calling 'Co-belligerence', which basically means fighting together and this philosophy pretends that if we find an agreement with another movement or organization to retain a certain general goal, we would be open to working with them even though mind we differ on other issues.	E 1	27-28
	E2: Yes, we cooperate with the Buddhist, the Christian, the Jewish. Of course we need to cooperate with them.	E 2	23
	For example, here in Italy, Liga Norte. It is one party here against migrants, against the Islam. Even though they are against us we respect them. We send them our program and invitations to our conferences. What we can do of course? Each one has its own interest, its own purpose and they are not like us but we respect them.	E 2	26
	So, you cooperate with everybody, doesn't matter which background they have? E2: With everyone. Even with the Jewish we cooperate, with the Rabbis, with everybody. We have many friends. Also in Argentina, we are linked with organizations who defend the Jews in the war. I was personally there in Buenos Aires. This is a very very good opportunity.	E 2	27-28
	In the more broader religious field it's a little bit more vague and not so developed like with the Catholic Church, but there are for instance in the human rights area... I know that my colleague is very much working for instance with the Bahai who are very open for this kind of cooperation and we are looking also more and more for, let's say not cooperation but also exchange and then also cooperation with other religions.	E 4	14
	I: There are also secular organizations doing philosophical lobbying in Europe. Do you also cooperate with them? E4: From time to time yes because we have also meetings together. We are invited together, also in the European Parliament sometimes when it is about religious freedom, because the topic relates also to philosophical and non-confessional organizations.	E 4	23-24
<i>high cooperation</i> - Representatives of the same religion cooperate very	We tend not to insist the facts and the interest we have to guide this. We have a closer cooperation with other Christian organizations or churches but not only.	E 1	26
	I: I would also like to know if you cooperate with other representatives of religious institutions in the EU like for example with other Muslim representatives.	E 2	16-17

closely (E1, 26; E2, 17; E3, 20; E4, 13)	E2: We are in cooperation in particular with the mosques, with the Islamic centre in each country. We can collaborate, we can meet each other... you know we call it mosque but it is no mosque... anyway, the Islamic centre.		
	I would say CEC and COMECE, the two organizations you named and then many other Christian organizations like Caritas or Jesuit refugee service. So, those who have been long established here. We work very close together except for some minor differences but we have basically the same approach.	E 3	20
	E4: So, it's true that COMECE is a main partner and also other Catholic organizations. We are also working closely with Eurodiaconia, the European platform of diaconical, Protestant organizations and of course there is also Caritas Europe and others. In the migration area you have CCME from our side and on the Catholic side you have other organizations working on the question of refugees and migration. On many levels we are working very closely together.	E 4	13

Chapter 4.3.4. Influence of Convictional Lobbying

<i>definition of the common good</i> - Freedom of religion (E1, 11,54; E2, 9; E4 22) - Avoid conflicts, provide peace (E2, 2,13,25; E3, 11; E4, 22) - Promote togetherness in Europe (E3, 8; E4, 3)	Back in the 1840s, religious freedom or freedom of conscience, freedom of religion or belief was an issue of concern and it has remained so. So, we have a fairly broad and encompassing understanding of freedom of religion or belief and promoting it and defending it is one of the priorities that we have.	E 1	11
	For example, in matters to do with religious freedom, today most of religious organizations would advocate for universal religious freedom. For some religious movements, it's more difficult but in general, there is more a sort of universal approach to it.	E 1	54
	Since almost 7 years we European Muslims met and we started to think how to avoid the clash of civilization.	E 2	2
	I agree with the French conception of Liberté, Égalité, and Fraternité but I don't agree with the idea of Égalité considering that everyone is equal. So, I said to them that it is very important to support for example the women who go to the beach with the bikini but also the girls with freedom who go by their own choice with the burkini because during the last 6 month many girls have been stopped by the police. I said that the state has to support and to respect the minorities. I think if you deal with equality this reduction is not really a work of the state. The government has to protect all the laws but also the individuals. You get what I am saying?	E 2	9
	E2: Of course, we want first to support interfaith dialogue. Nowadays, there is also the issue of intrafaith dialogue. We have too many problems between Sunni and Shia. 90% are Sunni and 10 % Shia, especially from the Iran. There is a big war now in Syria, in Iran, with this problem and many Muslims are killed. Of course, we support the minorities, because we are a minority in Europe. We support that fact that each one has to live with his own religion and each religion has the right and the duty, the responsibility to avoid the conflict.	E 2	13
	We are actually not involved in politics, because it is really our aim not to be involved in politics but into diplomacy, because in politics you are with one party against the other. No, no, we are with all the politicians. We are with all the people. Our enemy is no one. Our enemy is the war, the terrorism. We are not involved in politics. This is it not at all. In diplomacy, yes.	E 2	25
	Now, these days, we also try to engage the church in a debate about the future of Europe. I: Do you have a concrete vision of the future of Europe? E3: Well, of course the European states together that there are no further cracks. The Brits unfortunately opted for Brexit but we are very much arguing for togetherness in Europe and we also see our role as a church and as a member of the CEC very much in the ecumenical world and in a Europe which is united, because we feel that this togetherness will really help to face all the challenges, either terrorism or the social inequalities which are rising or the populist voices which are more and more gaining power. The future of Europe	E 3	6-8

	concerns us very much and we feel that the church is really asked to get involved also to defend the European values as they are in the treaty in the EU. Therefore, I think our vision is to have more Europe and also a better EU structure.		
	It is also trying to create an acceptance also for the ethical fundament the EU relies upon. So, it's not only the laws and regulations but it's also the feeling that Europe is needed and that it heads towards peace and stability. It's more a soft angle maybe but we consider it very important. We also see how easily the fundament gets cracks because people are working to destroy it.	E 3	11
	E4: I mean I could try to answer to that but of course we have also to see to become not superficial there because I mean I think that there are certain points where we are very close to one another. The question for peace for instance or living together in a peaceful way and neighborhood. There is also the question of religious freedom for all religions in Europe but also beyond Europe. The question about how do the European Institutions promote religious freedom elsewhere in the world.	E 4	22
	I: Why is it so important to represent the [organization] to the EU? E4: Well, I think one can really say that the churches in Europe form the very beginning were contributing and in favor of the process of unification and the coming together in Europe. That is true to the council of Europe but it's also true to the EU or at first time the Montanunion and all these developments because it was nearly from all of them seen as steps to peace and reconciliation in Europe.	E 4	2-3
<i>religious contribution to EU identity</i>	I: And do you think religion could contribute to it or could change it or influence it, like religious activism?	E 1	49-50
- Religion can contribute to the emergence of a EU identity (E1, 50,69-70; E2, 33-34; E3, 37; E4, 47)	E1: Yes, I think religion has contributed tremendously to the formation of European identity or a set of European virtues. Religious communities being centers of reflection, questioning, critique, philosophy these are ideals places to ask the right questions and perhaps even revive European identity because religions are story telling machines, they are poetry in community, they can generate vision and therefore I think they have a powerful role but they're not the only ones. What is distinct about religious organizations or religious communities is that they still connect a lot of people regardless of whether or not people are like active practicing or believers.		
- Problem of religious illiteracy (E1, 72)	I: And do you think religious lobbyists could contribute to this awareness ... I guess I asked already something similar but now I would like to ask regarding civil religion: Do you think religious lobbyists can contribute to a civil religion?	E 1	69-70
- Ecumenism is a positive example (E3, 35; E4, 51)	E1: I think so. I think so.		
	But we are facing another problem which is the level of religious illiteracy in public institutions in Europe, a lack of understanding of religion and a kind of fear because of secularization. There is a misunderstanding that religious cannot really play a role. And that's a wide spread understanding.	E 1	72
	I: And do you think the [organization] should contribute to a European identity? E2: Absolutely yes. That is what we are doing. It is very important for us to contribute to democracy, to stability in our loved Europe.	E 2	33-34
	I: Does the [organization] want to contribute to the emergence of a European identity? Is this one goal of the [organization]? E3: We want to contribute to the debate. I would think it is a little bit exaggerated as a national church to have this as a goal because Europe is very broad and as I said, very different. There is this saying that we want unity in diversity and I think this is very much also our experience in our ecumenical relationships. So, we can share our experiences and I really hope that this contribution can inspire also others to keep on debating and to see the need to have this debate.	E 3	34-35

	<p>I: And do you see already a success, that religions can affect the common good or the unity in Europe, like strengthening the unity?</p> <p>E3: Yes, I think the churches are still big entities who have many members, especially in Germany, they are very engaged and politically interested so I think the churches, and this is also what we are trying to do, use their partnership and work across borders which could be even done more than it is happening today.</p>	E 3	36-37
	<p>I think they are also a multiplayer of the European vision of unity in diversity and therefore it is important that churches have an interest about what is happening on a EU level and that they consider themselves also as a part of Europe.</p>	E 3	37
	<p>I: Would you say it is a goal from the [organization] to contribute to the EU identity?</p> <p>E4: Yes, I mean if you look on our website you will find we have written what we called an open letter to our churches about the future for Europe. We say Europe is really in a deep deep crisis. A crisis like never before which is really dramatic and we do not know how this will end this story and we are asking about what our churches have in mind speaking about Europe and what we think Europe should be and we invite for a discussion and make also now a process. We have 3 or 4 regional conferences in Northern, Central, and Southern Europe with our member churches coming together and to discuss on this. It will then lead to our assembly in June 2018 in Novi Sad in Serbia, where especially this will be the main topic. What is the future for Europe? What do we as churches see and define and determine the future for Europe and how do we also contribute to this. Yeah, absolutely.</p>	E 4	46-47
	<p>E4: No, but it would be much too much to say that we had a leading role. We had definitely not. But we were from the beginning in favor and tried to support it. I mean if you take such an organization like [organization]. [Organization] is a typical example of Europe because there is a huge variety in [organization]. You have Orthodox churches coming from a very different tradition than Protestant churches. You have this big big churches like the church of Sweden or the Protestant church of Germany. You have tiny, little, small churches like the church in Belgium or the Protestant church in Greece. It's a very European organization because it is so different and it is not always very easy to work for [organization] and in [organization] because of this diversity. But while working on this diversity - because we think we have to do this and because we want to share our opinions and our faith so on - we are doing somehow what Europe is about. You can say people who are involved and related to the process of what [organization] is about, you build also in a certain way a European identity, or?</p>	E 4	51
<p><i>EU identity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based on common values (E1, 46; E3, 33; E4, 29) - Doubts about an identity among EU citizens (E3, 31-33; E4, 39) 	<p>I: Now another question: do you think the EU or the EU citizens have a common identity?</p> <p>E1: My answer to that is a 'Yes'. It's a non-perceived common identity.</p> <p>I: What is it based on?</p> <p>E1: Well, I heard a preacher saying once that sometimes culture is like water for a fish. They are breathing it but they are not really conscious that water exists, just because they're in it. I think our approach to things like democracy, human rights, a value for arts and culture, the Christian roots, or the Christian values that have shaped the culture in Europe are things that really are shared across the continent.</p>	E 1	43-46
	<p>I: So do you think there supposed to be an EU identity? Is it something positive or rather something, which is just there... neutral?</p> <p>E1: I think there is something that can be identified as a European culture. Yes, absolutely. But also, the difficulty of Europe, some philosophers would say, is that Europe is the continent that invented universalism. What is commonly understood as universal in Europe is not necessarily as universal and perhaps a bit specific to Europe. So, Europeans have a hard time identifying a European</p>	E 1	47-48

identity, just because they perceive the European identity or once distinct about Europe as universal.		
I: So, may I ask you directly: do you think there is a civil religion in the EU? E1: I don't think so. I think that's one of the weaknesses of the EU but it's a very understandable one. The EU does not have a political culture. A unified political culture. It's a very recent organization and the narrative inspirational nature of the EU disappeared or was eclipsed very quickly by the common market and economic interest.	E 1	64-65
I: And do you think there would be a chance to construct such a civil religion? E1: Oh Yeah, I'm definite about it. But I know for a fact that EU institutions are really fighting or are struggling, is a better word, really struggling to come up with what they call a new narrative for Europe. It's hard, because there is some form of competition with national cultures and national civil religions and traditions. The challenge is to create a common sense of belonging and story and symbols and whatever identifies Europe as Europe. ??? as a friend of mine says without giving national communities the impression that Europe is threatening on their identity.	E 1	66-67
The biggest difficulty I belief, I'm going back to my earlier comments, is to identify things we belief to be universal as Europeans and it's hard for us, because for us it's natural and it's everywhere, like democracy, or criticism of power, or separation of power. Things like that actually emerged in Europe but we belief that they are universal goods. So it's hard to label them as European.	E 1	68
I: I would also like to ask: do you think there is a common identity in Europe? E2: Of what, of Muslims or...? I: No of Europe, of the European citizens. Is there a common identity? E2: Of course, we know that what is linked to us each other is the Euro, the money. But I think the new generation, the young, university students, Erasmus, also the new migrants. We are more linked, because we are suffering. Today there is a big problem all over Europe: it is the work. The young people don't have work. Of course, I think we are more linked than before. Before in the 2000s it was only about money but today. Of course, we don't like the bureaucracy of Europe. On one sense, it is nice that they control us. Our governments don't do this. But it is something about economics. About the people I think we are more close to each other. Especially, the young people. Especially the new generation.	E 2	29-32
I: I mentioned also in the beginning, there is very often expressed the need for a common European identity in the EU. Would you say that there is already a common identity? E3: That's a very tricky question. I don't know. I don't think so. I mean we have so many different mentalities that we can see now in the refugee question that there that there is no common attitude towards helping people in need. We see it when it comes to the Brexit, when some member states even say that it's great that the Brits left and they would also like to join. So, they don't believe apparently anymore in working together. We see in foreign policies that it's very difficult to come...	E 3	31-32
and I think the identity question is even more complicated because all the states have a different history. I think it's a big task to work on a European identity and it still lies before us.	E 3	33
It would be nice when European identity would mend to be open-minded, to be carrying for the other to not only think about 'Europe first' but really also to see the responsibility for the wider world but I think to claim that this was the European identity would be a bit too optimistic.	E 3	33
There is a certain European identity if you take the treaty, it is a little bit like Habermas argues in Germany and the constitution, if you take article 2 of the treaty, we argue in [organization] that is something what is the identity in the EU because it is about the fundamental values. I have it not open, but it is about human rights, liberties, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and so	E 4	39

<p>on. That together with the Charter of Human Rights is something where you can say Europe should be about, it is based on and what is also somehow the identity of Europe in which we live. But if you ask now if the European citizens relate to that... I mean ask them. I'm not so sure if for the moment many people in Europe have the feeling that they relate to this kind of fundament, if they look to the EU, or?</p>	
---	--

8.2. Website Analysis

8.2.1. Corpus

Websites

- BIC. "Brussels Office of the Baha'i International Community." Accessed Feb. 9, 2017. <https://www.bic.org/offices/brussels#sV5u6IgqL0XwoBYC.97>.
- CEC. "Conference of European Churches." Accessed Feb. 9, 2017. <http://www.ceceurope.org/>.
- COMECE. "Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community." Accessed February 09, 2017. <http://www.comece.eu/site/en/home>.
- EEA. "European Evangelical Alliance." Accessed Feb. 9, 2017. <http://www.europeanea.org/>.
- EHF. "European Humanist Federation." Accessed Feb. 9, 2017. <http://humanistfederation.eu/>.
- EML. "European Muslims League." Accessed Feb. 9, 2017. <http://www.eml.fm/>.
- HFE. "Hindu Forum of Europe." Accessed Feb. 9, 2017. <http://hinduforum.eu/>.

Website News

COMECE

1. Migration and European values. Nov. 29, 2016.
2. COMECE: "Looking forward with confidence". Oct. 27, 2016.
3. Catholic Church and the European Solidarity. Sept. 22, 2016.
4. COMECE welcomes the new EU Global Strategy. Jun. 29, 2016.
5. "Time has come for Europe to look ahead". Jun. 27, 2016.
6. Prayer for Europe. Jun. 14, 2016.
7. The Pope's Speech on Europe: powerful and encouraging. May 7, 2016.
8. Europe's vocation to promote peace in the world. Feb. 2, 2016.

CEC

1. Being Church in Europe Today: Migration through a theological lens. Dec. 14, 2016.
2. Migration, Integration, and European Values: High-level meeting with religious leaders at European Commission. Nov. 29, 2016.
3. CEC Meets Special Envoy Ján Figel': Promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief outside the EU. Oct. 27, 2016.
4. A Human Right Set Aside: European Parliament event spotlights freedom of religion. Sep. 28, 2016.
5. Religious Minorities as Part of Culturally Diverse Societies. Aug. 2, 2016.
6. UK EU Referendum: CEC calls for renewed commitment to unity in divisive times. Jun. 24, 2016.
7. What future for Europe? An open letter to CEC Member Churches. Jun. 20, 2016.
8. European ecumenical secretaries meet in Lisbon to discuss refugee crisis, religious freedom, and EU affairs. Jun. 6, 2016.
9. Europe Day: Celebrating values that unite us all. May 5, 2016.
10. TRG on EU Policy and Legislation meets in Athens. Feb. 13, 2016.

EHF

1. The 2016 Freedom of Thought Report is now available! Dec. 6, 2016.
2. EHF signs Civil Society Statement on Future Of Europe with 176 other organisations. Sep. 12, 2016.
3. Statement by 177 European and national CSOs and Trade Unions. Sep. 12, 2016.
4. EHF holds two high-level meetings with European Commission. Jul. 8, 2016.
5. Launch of High Ground Alliance for Choice and Dignity in Europe. Jun. 3, 2016.
6. Can Faith and Freedom coexist? Apr. 4, 2016.
7. Money vs people: Europe shameful deal. Mar. 16, 2016.
8. Holy alliance against freedom? Feb. 16, 2016.

EEA

1. Common Good: Videos. Dec. 15, 2016.
2. Praying for Europe in a time of change, fear and anger. Oct. 24, 2016.
3. General Assembly: Evangelicals in a changing Europe. Oct. 24, 2016.
4. Love-Europe, "Helping refugees find what they need most". Apr. 8, 2016.
5. The changing picture of religious freedom. Mar. 3, 2016.

BIC

1. Focus on what unites us, says BIC. Sep. 29, 2016.
2. European Parliament Intergroup releases annual report on religious freedom. Jul. 1, 2016.
3. European conferences highlight need for inclusive societies. Jun. 26, 2016.
4. Cooperation central to fighting intolerance, says BIC. Jun. 22, 2016.
5. EU Delegation to Iran encouraged to emphasize human rights. Apr. 13, 2016.

Documents

- CEC. 2016. "What future for Europe? Reaffirming the European project as building a community of values: An open letter of CEC to churches and partner organisations in Europe and an invitation to dialogue and consultation." Accessed Feb. 9, 2017. http://www.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/1GB2016_Doc15-Open-letter-Future-of-Europe.pdf.
- COMECE. 2016. "Europe's Vocation to Promote Peace in the World: A Contribution of the COMECE Bishops in View of the Forthcoming EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy." Accessed Feb. 9, 2017. http://www.comece.eu/dl/pkIOJKJKoKMKJqx4KJK/20160614_PEACE_report_EN.pdf.
- EHF. 2007. "The European Dream: Published to mark the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome." Accessed Feb. 9, 2017. <http://humanistfederation.eu/ckfinder/userfiles/files/publications/THE%20EUROPEAN%20DREAM.pdf>.

8.2.2. Analysis

Generalization of the Code	Coding	Doc	P/No
Chapter 4.4.1. Promoted Values			
<i>gender equality</i> - Mentioned by the EHF	It is still necessary to take notice, despite noteworthy progress, of extensive discrimination suffered by women through failure of society to treat men and women equally.	EHF 2007	P 14
<i>secularity</i> - Mentioned by the EHF	What do we want: Complete separation between religion and the State throughout Europe and at EU level as the best way to guarantee freedom of religion or beliefs;	EHF ws	
- Only secularism can guaranty religious freedom (EHF)	Secularism is the belief that, especially in multi-belief societies, the state and its official institutions should be neutral on the question of religion or belief, or (in its stronger form) that the state should be completely separate from religion or belief.	EHF ws	
- EU has to be strictly secular (EHF)	We campaign for a secular Europe and propose ambitious and progressive policies especially on ethical issues. Deeply committed to secularism, the EHF first strongly opposed the creation of a specific dialogue between European institutions and religious/non-confessional organisations. However, since the churches obtained the introduction of Article 17 TFEU, we have decided that we must take advantage of this opportunity rather than leave the floor to the churches.	EHF ws	
- No dialog between EU and religious or philosophical organizations (EHF)	This means first that the European institutions should be secular, i.e. neutral regarding religious and philosophical beliefs so as to ensure respect for freedom of all convictions, religious or non-religious ones.	EHF ws	
<i>education</i> - Mentioned by COMECE, CEC, EHF, EML, BIC	Every human being has the right to education that corresponds with his capabilities and skills. This enables him to participate in society and to contribute to its life in accordance with his talents. This fundamental right is affirmed in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.	COM ECE ws	
- Education is needed to strengthen other values (CEC, EHF, BIC)	The Conference of European Churches supports education that encourages open and democratic perspectives on European society. Education is a core means for promoting values of peace and reconciliation, intercultural dialogue, and democratic participation in European society.	CEC ws	
	Education should promote intellectual honesty and critical minds. It should foster a love of learning and an appreciation of the supremacy of reason and the scientific method in the search for knowledge.	EHF ws	
	promoting educational and cultural activities for the mutual understanding and the development of relations between people and nations;	EML ws	
	In its comments, the BIC encouraged the OSCE to explore "how educational processes can help nurture in this generation and generations to come a rich, robust and expansive sense of common identity and develop amongst European populations a strong loyalty with and responsibility towards all of humanity, rather than only towards those sharing similar social, cultural, national, or physical characteristics".	BIC news	No 1
<i>solidarity with migrants and refugees</i> - Mentioned by CEC, EEA, BIC, COMECE, EHF	Increasingly high numbers of refugees stranded at European borders underline the need to extend solidarity with those who cannot access European territory	CEC ws	
- EU can profit from	The COMECE Secretariat works for the rights of migrants, refugees and hosting societies to be harmonised and respected in the EU for the sake of the common good in the Christian spirit of welcoming the stranger.	COM ECE ws	
	The Refugee Campaign coordinates the efforts of many in order to help Evangelicals across Europe respond appropriately to the current asylum crisis.	EEA ws	

migrants/refugees (BIC, EHF)	How can migration and the movement of populations be a catalyst for the development of European communities?	BIC ws	
- Solidarity with refugees is a Christian value (COMECE, CEC, EEA)	Rev. Dr Aguswati Rambe from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria also turned to Christianity's roots to understand today's setting. Migration, she noted, is an essential experience of forming church, even from the stories of Adam and Eve, the exodus, the apostles, and other believers throughout the millennia. Today, this experience of movement is a "vein of spreading the gospel."	CEC news	No 1
- App 'Love-Europe' to coordinate refugees (EEA)	The auxiliary Bishop of Malines-Bruxelles also underlined the massive efforts accomplished by local churches to welcome refugees and promote a good integration in the long run. Finally, he reaffirmed the conviction of the Church that hospitality is the founding pillar of Christianity. "It is our duty to recall that every refugee has the right to receive a fair and human treatment. The question of a common solution to the refugee crisis is a question that touches directly upon the values and the future of Europe", he concluded.	COMECE news	No 1
- National governments threaten solidarity with refugees (EHF, CEC)	Thousands of refugees are coming into Europe every day. They come from terrible and difficult places and the majority flee because there is no alternative for survival. As Christians we want to act and offer hospitality and care for the weak, as Jesus learned us to do.	EEA news	No 4
	Our main focus is to share love and show hospitality to the refugees. Our first goal is that refugees will start to use the app in their daily life. We want them to experience love and we want to show them our source of Love, Jesus. Other highlights of the Love-Europe app [...] We want the app "Love-Europe" to help refugees find with what they need most.	EEA news	No 4
	This needs to be accomplished through a radical change of policies towards refugees and migrants. We often hear about the "migrants' crisis". But it is not the asylum-seekers who washed up on our coasts who plunged Europe into crisis, but the extremely poor and selfish handling by European governments of these people escaping violence and poverty.	EHF news	No 4
	And the European Union has a hosting capacity outstandingly superior to the 160 000 refugees that governments committed to take care of. We call on the Member States to react with responsibility and dignity and to establish legal safe paths to the European territory.	EHF news	No 4
	Refugees and migrants are first and foremost human beings who hold human rights and should be treated as such. Moreover, we believe that they do not only contribute economically and demographically to our societies, they also bring with them new cultures and traditions that make the European society rich and diverse.	EHF news	No 7
	Although international law demands that Europe offers protection to those in need and therefore grants the possibility for every person arriving in Europe to ask for asylum, harsh deterrents adopted by some countries may even become the norm. Europe's politics face a clash of values.	CEC 2016	P 8
	The present situation is extremely urgent. It does immeasurable harm to the soul of Europe to ward off victims of violence and terror by fire-arms at border fences, or let people drown in the Mediterranean. Solidarity with refugees is a consequence of Christian faith and our commitment to working towards a just and compassionate society.	CEC 2016	P 8
democracy	The Conference of European Churches supports education that encourages open and democratic perspectives on European society. Education is a core means for promoting values of peace and reconciliation, intercultural dialogue, and democratic participation in European society.	CEC ws	
- Mentioned by CEC, EHF			
- Implicates rule of law and freedom of	Humanists defend the civic virtues of democracy, which requires the negotiation of differences and the art of compromise as the best method for achieving social consensus.	EHF ws	

expression (EHF)	Democracy and the rule of law go hand in hand, but whereas no set of international laws defines what a democracy is, the rule of law rests on the concept of equality before the law for all human beings in their rights as well as in their duties and is supported by a long series of international treaties.	EHF ws	
	The EHF values freedom of expression as fundamental in democracy. It is protected by all major international Human Rights instruments and the European Court of Human Rights has repeated on numerous occasions that it extends to ideas that “offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population”.	EHF ws	
	In early May the European Union and Council of Europe mark their respective Europe Days on 5 and 9 May to celebrate European core values including integration, human rights, and democracy.	CEC news	No 9
<i>bioethics</i> - Mentioned by CEC, EHF, COMECE - Competences should remain on a national level (COMECE) - Counter extremist religious lobbies (EHF) - protection of right to master its own body -> abortion, embryonic stem cell research, assistance to die (EHF)	Over the next decade life-changing biotechnologies will emerge, with potentially significant impact on European society. Increasingly, issues relating to biotechnology and ethics are being taken up by the European Institutions and by the Council of Europe.	CEC ws	
	COMECE chiefly covers the bioethical issues that arise to the EU level in the ambits of health and of research, although the main competences with regard to these matters remain largely at the Member States’ level.	COM ECE ws	
	Specifically, the promotion and protection of women’s sexual reproductive health rights when and where they are threatened.	EHF ws	
	Initiated by extremist religious lobbies, the initiative calls for the protection of the human embryo in Europe, most specifically in the areas of research and EU development aid. If it becomes law, "One of Us" will have dramatic consequences for research, women and public health. The EHF is mobilized with SRHR providers and scientific organisations against the initiative.	EHF ws	
	EHF's main concern was to secure EU public funding for human embryonic stem cells research while some religious groups and conservative MEPs were trying to stop it on the ground that this research was not "ethical".	EHF ws	
	As humanists, we believe that the right to be the master of one’s own body is a fundamental human right and women should therefore be allowed to decide whether or not to continue with a pregnancy.	EHF ws	
	The difference between a secularist/humanist outlook and a religious one is often very plain in matters concerning the beginning and end of life – bioethical questions concerning stem-cell and genetic research, medically-aided conception, abortion, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, etc. The root of the difference lies in the religious view of life as a conditional gift from God by contrast with the humanist one of life as our own to optimise according to human considerations – and the secularist view that the state should not interfere in such matters on the basis of any religion or belief.	EHF ws	
<i>environmental protection</i> - Mentioned by COMECE and CEC	CEC works on a number of issues of common concern for European churches. These include bioethics, peace and reconciliation (including commemorations of World War I), labour and economic issues, climate change, education, economic and social issues, environment, climate justice, [...].	CEC ws	
	Since 2008 COMECE has been engaged with the topic of climate change and regularly stressed the necessity of an ecological conversion and a different and more sober style of life.	COM ECE ws	
<i>human rights</i>	CEC Member Churches advocate for the promotion and protection of human rights at the highest standards inside Europe and beyond its borders.	CEC ws	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentioned by CEC, COMECE, EEA, EHF, HFE, BIC - Conservative religious lobbying is a threat to human rights (EHF) - These values do not come from a divine authority but from human nature (EHF) - Protecting human rights is a religious value (HFE, EEA) 	COMECE closely follows policies related to justice and fundamental rights in areas such as equality and non-discrimination, data protection, family matters, rights of the child, child protection and EU citizenship COMECE is of the view that fundamental rights must have a clear and objective concept of human dignity as their basis, that the focus must be on the ethical implications of EU policies and legislation, and that considerations must be given to the way these latter may impact on the activities of the Church.	COM ECE ws	
	We are working with a view to mobilise a global host of Christians by 2020 in order to advance the Gospel together and promote a solid understanding of civility as the basis and protection for rights, responsibilities and respect for all.	EEA ws	
	Although the European Union is founded on the shared principles of human rights and the rule of law, in practice EU decision-making is subject to strong lobbying by conservative religious organisations trying to impose their views on issues like women's reproductive and sexual health and rights, LGBT rights, euthanasia, freedom of expression, etc. These groups present themselves as "human rights oriented" and against discriminations, sometimes in a very deceptive way. They use human rights terminology to fight against contraception, abortion, freedom of speech, gay marriage/adoption or stem cell research. They present themselves as victims of discrimination which they call "Christian persecution" or "christianophobia". They hide behind "religious freedom" to implement their conservative agenda and to limit human rights and equality.	EHF ws	
	We work in partnership with a large network of associations - including progressive religious organisations - with which we share goals and interests to promote fundamental rights in Europe and oppose conservative religious lobbying;	EHF ws	
	Humanism itself is fundamentally committed to human rights: if this is the only life we have, people should have the maximum freedom to live it according to their own beliefs. In this commitment to the open society, where difference is acknowledged and no final answers are imposed, Humanism differs utterly from those religions and ideologies that seek to impose their own notion of truth or right living on everyone.	EHF ws	
	They are based on an understanding of our common humanity, individual human rights, mutual tolerance, and agreement neither to resort to threats or violence nor to seek to impose our own particular worldview on others. Our values come neither from divine authority nor from a particular tradition or culture but are deeply grounded in human nature and are universal. They entail both rights and responsibilities.	EHF ws	
	Preserve European values of human dignity by drawing on the Hindu ethos that is rooted in respect for all traditions, cultures, religions and belief.	HFE ws	
	Mrs Rachel Bayani, Representative of the Baha'i International Community in Brussels, said: "Without respect for the human rights of every citizen being soundly established, measures taken in other areas of human affairs – ranging from the economy to the environment – as commendable as they might be, ultimately fail."	BIC news	No 5
<i>individual freedom</i>	We promote individual freedom and oppose the influence of religious conservatism on European policies;	EHF ws	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentioned by the EHF - Sexual freedom (EHF) - Extremist religious efforts 	Humanists defend the right of others to have their own beliefs and life styles, subject only to them not interfering with other people's rights – hence our work to oppose constant extremist religious efforts to restrict personal freedom, especially sexual freedom, reproductive freedom for women, especially contraception, abortion, and artificial insemination, to oppose scientific research in matters such as genetics and to resist voluntary euthanasia – the right to die with dignity.	EHF ws	

restrict personal freedom (EHF)	We therefore strongly defend the rights for homosexual couples to marry, raise and adopt children, with full recognition of parenthood for both parents	EHF ws	
	In its race against public deficit, it is clear that the EU has forgotten what constitutes yet the heart of the European project: the individual.	EHF news	No 4
<i>solidarity and social justice</i> - Mentioned by CEC, COMECE, EHF, EML, HFE, BIC	We also reflect on how our experience and theological traditions can contribute to a socially inclusive and sustainable European policy.	CEC ws	
	Promoting social integration of foreigners in Europe, and the Europeans abroad;	EML ws	
	Provide support to the European governments and citizens in building communities that are cohesive and integrated.	HFE ws	
	A solidarity-based Europe? Yes. This entails everyone's contribution so that Europe may become an authentic solidarity-based community, overcoming egoisms and closures.	COM ECE news	No 2
	The Pope singled out the creative curiosity which has characterised the European spirit throughout history, he pointed to strategies which can lift Europe out of its current crisis, he urged inclusion of all citizens on the rising tide a successful return to foundational values promises to being - the poor, the infirm, and particularly our young generation - and pleaded for a new humanism.	COM ECE news	No 7
	"No society can hope to thrive if large sections of its population are relegated to the lowest ranks of economy and prevented from contributing to its prosperity and growth, and if a significant amount of its youth are barred from contributing to its intellectual capital," said Mrs Bayani.	BIC news	No 5
	We call on the Commission but also and above all on the Council to put the values of equality, solidarity and social justice back at the heart of the European project.	EHF news	No 4
	On its own territory, the EU has promoted solidarity between rich and poor regions through cohesion policies and the accompanying funds (such as the European Social Fund).	CEC 2016	P 5
	One of the many values that the citizens of Europe have in common and wish to share in is the European social model. This is a defining concept that differentiates what Europe is building from international groupings elsewhere in the world.	EHF 2007	P 10
<i>tolerance and pluralism</i> - Mentioned by CEC, COMECE, EEA, EHF, EML, BIC - Importance of intercultural dialog (CEC, COMECE, EHF, EML)	As a peace building organisation actively seek to build bridges of reconciliation, contribute to peaceful pluralism, social justice, and empower individuals and Member Churches in their own bridge-building work.	CEC ws	
	Increasing plurality and global migration movements raises the importance of intercultural dialogue in our society. In her contributions to this topic COMECE underlines the importance of «intercultural competence», of tolerance, openness and of mutual respect in a context of different cultures and traditions.	COM ECE ws	
	Christian communities seeking to serve their context should be "faith-based but not faith-biased". In a moment of strong secularism, Christians have to "deprivatise our faith" and unashamedly serve others and "demonstrate in our actions that the Jesus manifesto is authentic and real", he said.	EEA news	No 3
	Equal treatment for all and non-discrimination on all grounds (ethnic or national origin, religion and belief, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc);	EHF ws	
	Ideologies, nationalism, fundamentalism, partisan opinions have no place in humanism which instead stands for tolerance, openness to others, the wish to build bridges between different beliefs, religions and political forces.	EHF ws	

	The values we promote for Europe are essentially secular, that is neutral in matters of religion and belief. They underpin a society in which all people, whatever their religion, philosophy or beliefs may live in harmony without favour or discrimination.	EHF ws	
	promotion and encouragement of cultural , social and economic exchanges;	EML ws	
	The EML will take actions necessary to support cultural dissemination and exchange of experiences through any means of communication.	EML ws	
	Addressing the participants in a session on tolerance and non-discrimination (link is external), the BIC Brussels Representative said, "One of the most pressing questions...is how people of diverse backgrounds are to live together... and how to counter discrimination, racism, and xenophobia.	BIC news	No 1
	Another important issue is recognition of and respect for diversity. Throughout its history, there was never a homogenous (Christian) Europe, and the Europe of the future will also be pluralist.	CEC 2016	P 12
	While parts of Europe have been moving towards greater unity, diversity remains a characteristic of the continent's identity. This diversity of cultures, traditions and religious identities must be respected, cultivated and even celebrated for the EU to have a future.	CEC 2016	P 12
	Tolerance is thus deeply engraved in the European canon of values – and tolerance, of course, is tested only when faced with what it finds difficult to bear.	EHF 2007	P 2
	Peacebuilding and reconciliation are among the deepest historical roots of CEC and continue to form a major part of our raison d'être.	CEC ws	
	To communicate to the EU institutions the concerns and opinions of the Catholic Bishops in their own fields of interest relating to the construction of a peaceful and prosperous Europe for all.	COM ECE ws	
	But humanism is also about values, about how to conduct one's life in the best possible way, promoting peace, freedom, equality and solidarity	EHF ws	
<i>peace</i> - Mentioned by CEC, COMECE, EHF, EML, HFE, EAA, BIC	"Among the many shining stars, of the European flag, we would like to radiate our light, contributing to the development, prosperity and general peace, of our beloved European land"	EML ws	
	Promote our shared values of European citizenship, interfaith friendship and peaceful coexistence.	HFE ws	
	We understand ourselves very much in that tradition. We strongly favour peace and cooperation, and we from the Russian Alliance stand for the close collaboration of evangelical churches throughout Europe.	EEA news	No 3
	In her address at the seminar, Rachel Bayani, representative of the BIC, spoke about the need for coalitions to build stronger bridges of understanding through deep engagement in collaborative efforts to work for social harmony. "Coalitions should be encouraged to reach higher and higher levels of unity of thought and develop a common vision for the world we are trying to move towards," she stated	BIC news	No 4
	"Peace is not merely the absence of war, nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies. Rather it is founded on a correct understanding of the human person and requires the establishment of an order based on justice and charity." (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 494)	COM ECE 2016	P 8
	Recently CEC has carried out several events addressing freedom of religion or belief.	CEC news	No 3
	It has an ambitious goal – to pave the way for far greater Gospel impact in Europe by 2020 – because we have changed attitudes towards religious freedom, and because we have renewed Evangelical confidence in the Gospel and in our ability to share it, no matter what happens. Europe's	EEA ws	
<i>religious freedom</i> - Mentioned by CEC, COMECE, EEA, EHF, BIC			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservative religious organizations superficially support it (EHF) - Non-believers get discriminated in EU (EHF) - Protect religious minorities (CEC) 	Evangelicals will be effective Good News People.		
	They [conservative religious organizations] present themselves as victims of discrimination which they call “Christian persecution” or “christianophobia”. They hide behind “religious freedom” to implement their conservative agenda and to limit human rights and equality.	EHF ws	
	In the meetings we have had with EU institutions since then, non-confessionals have not always been treated as equals with churches representatives. With the European Parliament and the EU Commission, the EHF had to fight hard to make sure that non-believers’ voice was heard and respected in these meetings.	EHF ws	
	As a universal human right, freedom of religion or belief safeguards respect for diversity. It includes the right to change or leave one’s religion or belief, as well as the right to hold no religion or not to believe. Freedom of religion or belief applies to individuals, as right-holders.	EHF ws	
	To promote religious freedom and more generally, peace, justice and liberty, COMECE is also involved in ecumenical, intercultural and interreligious dialogues.	COM ECE ws	
	Religious minorities contribute to the development of European societies from the political, social, and economic points of view and they are part of the enrichment of the European cultural heritage.	CEC news	No 5
	At the end of February, Christians working on religious freedom in Europe came together again for the European Religious Liberty Forum that EEA and Advocates Europe host together.	EEA news	No 4
	In the session on "Fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief", the BIC contribution focused on coalition-building. In particular, it highlighted the growing tendency between a variety of social actors, whether religious or not, to speak up for each other and to build coalitions in order to promote freedom of religion and belief.	BIC news	No 1

Chapter 4.4.2. Meaning and Purpose of the EU

<i>global responsibility</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentioned by CEC and COMECE - EU has a leader role in several policy areas (CEC) - EU has to provide peace (CEC, COMECE) 	At a global level, the EU runs the world's biggest emergency humanitarian aid budget (ECHO) while the EU and its Member States are also major players in the area of development cooperation (particularly through its development budgets and the European Development Fund). Regarding climate change and nature protection the EU plays a leadership role. Last, but not least the EU has led several peacekeeping operations in different parts of the world	CEC 2016	P 5
	Trough the instruments of its Enlargement Policy, the EU has made an important contribution to achieving relative stability in the Western Balkans after the horrific wars of the Yugoslavian succession despite lasting political problems and burdens from the past	COM ECE 2016	P 10
	Moreover, with its over thirty peacekeeping operations and civilian missions the EU has to date helped to maintain peace in several of the world’s trouble spots, such as currently in Mali, the Central African Republic or in the waters of the coast of Somalia	COM ECE 2016	P 10
<i>common problems</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentioned by CEC 	In this historic moment the European Union, which covers the major part of the continent and is responsible for developments that have considerable impact on other parts of the continent, is at a crossroads. We must work together to foster hope and cultivate constructive solutions to our common problems.	CEC 2016	P 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU memberstates face common problems only solvable united 	Problems arising in an increasingly globalised and interdependent world need global and international approaches to be effective. Climate change and pollution, for example, do not stop at national borders. International crime and terrorism need international responses. Global economic problems need globally coordinated solutions. It is clear that individual countries are less effective in tackling their problems when they act on their own than when they coordinate with other countries. They need partnerships and networks to amplify their voice and strengthen their influence.	CEC 2016	P 2
<i>provide peace</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentioned by COMECE, EHF, CEC - EU has the vocation to provide peace in the world (COMECE, EHF) 	After the unification of Europe, which was in itself a project of peace and reconciliation, the Bishops emphasised the vocation of the EU to build peace in the world.	COM ECE news	No 8
	The current crisis highlights the urgent need to reflect on fundamental questions: how do we ensure that the European project reclaims its promise of peace, democracy and solidarity?	EHF news	No 3
	It was in this febrile atmosphere in the mid-twentieth century that a small multinational group of devout Christian statesmen came together and dared to pray for, dream of, and proclaim the possibility of a better way—a way for the diverse peoples of Europe to live and prosper together in peace	CEC 2016	P 3
	The European project, in its various manifestations, stands as an example at can be done through reconciliation, stability and prosperity.	CEC 2016	P 4
	The European Union started life as a project of peace and reconciliation. Over the years, as European integration transformed our continent's political culture and economic life, the dangers of armed conflict between the nations of Europe receded	COM ECE 2016	P 6
	Europe's transition from a war-torn region to a project of peace is a testimony of humanity's ability to transcend long-standing conflicts in pursuit of a collective good.	BIC ws	
<i>common market</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentioned by COMECE, CEC, EEA - Common market is a central project (COMECE) - Market cannot be the only guiding principle (CEC). 	In 1957 the six founding nations of the European Economic Community set out to create a common market with a common competition and trade policy. This project remains central to the European Union.	COM ECE ws	
	Europe can be seen as a cultural zone with common values (human rights, tolerance, freedom of conscience...), as a political or economic union (the EU), as a mere geographic space with its history, etc.	EEA news	No 3
	The European Union cannot survive as a beacon of hope if the law of the market is the only guiding principle. We have to recapture the spirit that inspired the founding fathers – including reconciliation, forgiveness, solidarity, human dignity with equal respect for all.	CEC 2016	P 18
<i>unite European peoples</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentioned by CEC, BIC, COMECE - Unity vs. wars and division (CEC, BIC) - Unity as a vocation (COMECE) 	The fragmented and divided Europe of the 1940s and 1950s needed to surmount political divisions to devote itself anew to the peoples torn apart by the Second World War.	CEC ws	
	At a workshop in the Fundamental Rights Forum, the BIC contribution focused on the need to strengthen our shared human identity: "European society today is essentially a sample of the World's population. To ensure the inclusion and participation of everyone, we need to nurture a sense of common identity and revisit some of our assumptions about human nature	BIC news	No 3
	The European Union is a project of community and solidarity. A conscious withdrawal of a member is therefore painful and has consequences for all. The existing cultural and spiritual ties should be preserved, used and reinforced in the future.	COM ECE news	No 5
	By establishing the European Union as a supranational entity, the founders of the EU wanted to overcome the trap of nationalism that twice in half a century led Europe to disastrous wars. The integration of Europe, as the European Union, was a visionary project.	CEC 2016	P 5

<p><i>protect values</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentioned by COMECE, CEC, EHF, EEA, HFE - EU is rooted in common values and has to protect them (COMECE, EHF, HFE, CEC, EEA) - EU has responsibility to promote its values in the world (COMECE) - EU is in danger to lose its values (EHF, CEC, COMECE) - Values rooted in Judeo-Christian tradition (CEC, COMECE) - Values rooted in humanist tradition long before Christianity (EHF) 	Moreover, in recent years, the EU intensified efforts to promote Human Rights outside its borders and it has played a major role in International Trade and Development Aid.	COM ECE ws	
	Common secular European values are those reaffirmed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.	EHF ws	
	Preserve European values of human dignity by drawing on the Hindu ethos that is rooted in respect for all traditions, cultures, religions and belief.	HFE ws	
	The European Union was founded on respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights. Together we are called to uphold these common values that helped found the European political institutions.	CEC news	No 9
	Assist us in committing ourselves to a Europe of the Spirit, founded not just on economic treaties, but also on values which are human and eternal;	COM ECE news	No 6
	Europe can be seen as a cultural zone with common values (human rights, tolerance, freedom of conscience...), as a political or economic union (the EU), as a mere geographic space with its history, etc.	EEA news	No 3
	The EU has to firmly and coherently defend the values of the European project.	EHF news	No 4
	We call on the Commission but also and above all on the Council to put the values of equality, solidarity and social justice back at the heart of the European project.	EHF news	No 4
	Europe should not abandon its values by shamefully trading people against money as it is about to do with Turkey, a country with a poor human rights record.	EHF news	No 7
	This hope could only be realised if people and nations were prepared to accept common values emerging from the cultural, religious, and humanist inheritance of Europe; values that are also at the heart of the Gospel message. Love your enemies, forgive others as you are forgiven, be in solidarity with the poor and the down-trodden, and share with your neighbour. It is to this heritage we turn as we continue our efforts for reconciliation and solidarity in Europe today.	CEC 2016	P 3
	The integration of Europe, as the European Union, was a visionary project. It went beyond reconciling states and aspired to unite the peoples of Europe around the notion of a "community of shared values."	CEC 2016	P 5
	Today's Europe is characterised by a lack of vision and hope, and by growing fear. Fear of unemployment, decreasing future pension payments, climate change, terrorism, conflicts at the borders, migrants and refugees, loss of identity and loss of culture play an increasingly dominant role in daily thoughts. Many people see themselves as powerless and as victims of the processes over which they have no control. The present situation and prevailing mood presents a threat to the values on which the EU was built: peace, solidarity, unity in diversity, democracy, justice, the rule of law, human rights, freedom of religion and ecological sustainability. If the EU were to unravel, the common values on which it is based could be endangered as well.	CEC 2016	P 11
	Rather, the way forward is to search for ways to make the EU function better on the basis of the common values mentioned above. A community is not only based on laws and on rules but is also undergirded by values. In the case of the European Union these values are not exclusively Christian but they are deeply rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition.	CEC 2016	P 13
	As to the falsity of the claim, consider the facts. All human communities share very similar moral attitudes (seeing virtue in courage, compassion, truthfulness, friendship etc), attitudes enshrined in moral codes dating from long before Christianity: (the 'golden rule' antedates Christianity by at least	EHF 2007	P 3

	600 years).		
	The process of European integration is based on values rooted mainly in Christian inspiration and widely held as a universal ethos.	COM ECE 2016	P 13
	Promoting common values and addressing the threats to them is a common and shared European responsibility	COM ECE 2016	P 14

Chapter 4.4.3. Opposition and Threats to the EU

<i>opposing dictatorship</i>	The European Union with its undergirding values and framework for cooperation and common action was a key factor in overcoming undemocratic and totalitarian political regimes, which ruled for a substantial part of the 20th century in the east and south of the continent.	CEC 2016	P 4
- Mentioned by CEC and EHF			
- EU vs totalitarian regimes in the 20th century (CEC) EU vs religious oppression (EHF, CEC)	In the history of Europe, people living on our continent have had devastating experiences with ideologies claiming to set clearly defined cultural, ethnic and religious or pseudo-religious standards which apply to everybody. Therefore, the unification of most of Europe in peace and freedom since the Second World War and for the first time since the Middle Ages, is a major historical achievement.	CEC 2016	P 4
	Europe started as an uneasy juxtaposition of rival empires, of conquerors and all powerful monarchs. The Catholic Church was for a long time the only spiritual power, made use of by powerful politicians the better to control people's minds.	EHF 2007	P 6
<i>opposing racism and xenophobia</i>	This work also needs to be done at school and we encourage governments to reinforce their engagement in that sense, by building partnerships with associations fighting against racism or homophobia, with family planning, etc.	EHF news	No 4
- Mentioned by EHF, BIC, CEC			
- In a context of migration (EHF, CEC)	Yet those who survive the dangerous journey to Europe, with the hope that they will be greeted as human beings worthy of dignity and respect, are instead at times being met with attacks from far-right activists, alongside the rise of populist politics and xenophobia.	EHF news	No 7
- It is growing (BIC, CEC)			
	In the face of growing racism and xenophobia, now is the time to focus on what unites us.	BIC news	No 1
	The urgent need to combat discrimination and hate crimes in Europe and the world at large calls for higher degrees of cooperation between civil society organizations, stated the Baha'i International Community (BIC) Brussels Office at a recent seminar, titled "Turning words into action to address anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination".	BIC news	No 4
	Addressing the participants in a session on tolerance and non-discrimination (link is external), the BIC Brussels Representative said, "One of the most pressing questions...is how people of diverse backgrounds are to live together... and how to counter discrimination, racism, and xenophobia.	BIC news	No 1
	On the one hand the moral and legal obligation to offer protection to those in need, and on the other the political task of ensuring orderly movement and procedures to and in the EU. With anti-immigrant sentiments currently growing, this clash is likely to intensify in the near future.	CEC 2016	No 8
<i>opposing populism</i>	The Brussels representative of the EEA, Christel Lamère Ngnambi (Belgium), spoke on how "national populism has been on the rise almost everywhere in Europe for the last 15 years". The refugee crisis has become a "spiritual revealer".	EEA news	No 3
- Mentioned by EEA, EHF, CEC, COMECE			
- National populism vs.	We also observed how the refugee crisis, fear of Islamic terrorism and inappropriate populist responses is already having an impact. It is essential that we speak up against the undermining human rights, from Hungary to	EEA news	No 5

refugees (EEA, EHF)	the UK.		
- National populism vs. EU (CEC, COMECE)	The report [Freedom of Thought Report 2016] also examines the rise of populist parties and leaders, and how in some cases they are giving rise to a new breed of “traditionalist and religious authoritarianism”.	EHF news	No 1
- Religious populism vs. liberal humanists (EHF)	The difficult situation that a deeply divided and wounded United Kingdom is experiencing at the moment shows us that nothing is to be gained from giving in to populists discourse. Arousing fear and hatred of migrants, encouraging demagogic discourse and communitarianism only lead to political chaos, economic crisis, resentment and a country’s implosion.	EHF news	No 4
	Moreover, the EU is perceived as infringing on national sovereignty and undermining citizens’ power. Politicians who have, in the course of time, blamed the EU for many problems that were not the EU's responsibility, have contributed to this alienation between the EU institutions and its citizens.	CEC 2016	P 10
	The future of the EU is extremely uncertain, amidst surging populisms and nationalism, Brexit, growing divide between citizens and political institutions.	COM ECE news	No 2
<i>opposing poverty and social exclusion</i>	The main theme of the COMECE assembly was poverty in Europe. Perhaps it would be best to say: the bishops put at the centre of their reflection men and women in our continent living in conditions of poverty or who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion.	COM ECE news	No 2
- Mentioned by COMECE, BIC, EHF			
- Combatted by a true solidarity (EHF)	“No society can hope to thrive if large sections of its population are relegated to the lowest ranks of economy and prevented from contributing to its prosperity and growth, and if a significant amount of its youth are barred from contributing to its intellectual capital,” said Mrs Bayani.	BIC news	No 5
	We set our “European Dream” – a vision of a Europe in which democracy is participative as well as representative. It is a Europe in which our shared citizenship creates a true solidarity and cohesion across the continent, thereby contributing to the struggle against poverty and social exclusion.	EHF 2007	P 4
<i>opposing religious conservatism and extremism</i>	Although the European Union is founded on the shared principles of human rights and the rule of law, in practice EU decision-making is subject to strong lobbying by conservative religious organisations trying to impose their views on issues like women’s reproductive and sexual health and rights, LGBT rights, euthanasia, freedom of expression, etc. These groups present themselves as “human rights oriented” and against discriminations, sometimes in a very deceptive way. They use human rights terminology to fight against contraception, abortion, freedom of speech, gay marriage/adoption or stem cell research. They present themselves as victims of discrimination which they call “Christian persecution” or “christianophobia”. They hide behind “religious freedom” to implement their conservative agenda and to limit human rights and equality.	EHF ws	
- Mentioned by EHF, EEA			
- Christian conservatives threaten European human rights (EHF)			
- Religious conservatism impedes social progress (EHF)	Secularization is growing in Europe. But a closer look at several European countries shows that the separation of their governments from religion is far from guaranteed and that religious conservatism impedes social progress.	EHF ws	
- Religious beliefs should be excluded from public debate (EHF)	Besides official and moderate religious representation, extremist religious (mostly Christian) organisations have become very active in EU corridors, trying to impose their ideologically-driven, draconian and undemocratic agendas onto the rest of society by influencing laws and policies, with no respect for other religious and philosophical views.	EHF ws	
- Extremist religious organizations impose their	In November 2012, the EHF strongly opposed the nomination of the Maltese candidate Tonio Borg as EU Commissioner for Health and	EHF ws	

<p>ideologies (EHF)</p> <p>- Some religious movements produce fear against enemies (EEA)</p>	Consumer policy. We thought that his ultra-conservative views on a number of societal issues (abortion, contraception, LGBT's rights) would be damaging for the quality of health services enjoyed by European citizens.		
	Some ideological movements are using a religious language to portray the state as a kind of "saviour god" against supposed enemies. In the new context, Christians can be fearful – some are concerned about Islam and its impact in their society, and are hurt when they are labelled as "racists"- but also, at times, too naïve about the effects of migration, Lamère analysed.	EEA news	No 3
	Religious lobbies are pressuring policymakers for exemptions or for permission to impose their views on the rest of society	EHF news	No 6
	Contrary to some powerful voices, religion – and specifically Christianity – does not bring us together but instead divides us. Religious spokesmen (rarely women) like to refer to their beliefs as 'humanist' but this is a thin and meagre 'humanism' that is merely a restraint upon their devotion to a transcendent realm, a label adopted under pressure of criticism	EHF 2007	P 2
<p><i>opposing materialism and egoism</i></p> <p>- Mentioned by COMECE, EEA, CEC, EHF</p> <p>- Solidarity in Europe: everyone must contribute (COMECE)</p> <p>- Community vs. individualistic lifestyle (EEA)</p> <p>- Europe vs. competitiveness and profit (CEC)</p>	A solidarity-based Europe? Yes. This entails everyone's contribution so that Europe may become an authentic solidarity-based community, overcoming egoisms and closures.	COM ECE news	No 2
	Europeans are desperately searching for identity in all areas of life. The strongly individualistic lifestyle needs to be addressed and ways of living out community to be explored.	EEA news	No 3
	The neglect of their importance over the past years led to Europe's current empty heart, driven by economic competitiveness and profit, equipping students and young professionals with high profile science degrees, but forgetting about a bigger goal than success and profit. The EU and Europe as a whole need once again a clear explanation about what its roots and goals are.	CEC 2016	P 16
	Europe has to face its demons. Nationalism is a centrifugal force that undermines international solidarity and friendship between peoples. On a more global scale, the cult of the primacy of individual success over collective effort, and the excess of competition within and between groups are harmful centrifugal forces.	EHF 2007	P 9
<p><i>opposing national egoism and division</i></p> <p>- Mentioned by CEC, EEA, BIC, EHF, COMECE</p> <p>- National division is rising (CEC)</p> <p>- Nationalism in general needs to be overcome (EHF, BIC)</p> <p>- EU vs. national egoism (CEC, EHF, COMECE)</p>	Euroscepticism is on the rise and along with it new forms of divisive nationalism.	CEC news	No 9
	Some nations reassert their identity in ways that rightly worry their neighbours or their ethnic and religious minorities.	EEA news	No 2
	"Differences between the peoples of the world are assumed to be pronounced, centuries-old, ineradicable, and productive of conflict. Any attempt to foster inclusion needs to revisit that assumption. Today's reality needs a conception of our identity that is wider, one which expands to include all of humanity.	BIC news	No 3
	The European project is going through a major crisis. One of the most recent manifestations of this is of course the Brexit and the announced exit of our British friends from the European Union.	EHF news	No 4
	Rather, we see a growing body of opinion that has lost faith in the promise of a united Europe, that distrusts political elites, and that would like to renationalise policies	CEC 2016	P 2
	Popular support for the EU is rapidly declining. This has been aggravated when national leaders in a number of occasions refer to EU institutions as being responsible for all that is going wrong, and fail to attribute to the EU what is going well. If there is joint policy making in the EU nowadays, it seems that it is based less on a joint vision and more on a simple cost-benefit analysis of individual Member States.	CEC 2016	P 6

	Europe has to face its demons. Nationalism is a centrifugal force that undermines international solidarity and friendship between peoples	EHF 2007	P 9
	Europe as an alternative to the excesses of globalised finance, Europe as the definition of a cultural, social and economic space, overtaking national divisions while safeguarding a human dimension that transcends cross-border networks – the stakes are high.	EHF 2007	P 12
	An authentic European peace policy based on values will also help to overcome the divisions between Member States that sometimes tend to give preference to their particular national interests before the European and global common good.	COM ECE 2016	P 14
<i>opposing crises</i>	Multiple, intersecting crises challenge the European project and its relationship to the global community. Violence and conflict upset life within and just beyond Europe.	CEC news	No 9
- Mentioned by CEC, COMECE, EEA	Life in Europe continues to be formed by financial, economic, social, and employment crises. These realities affect many people and households in Europe, including the people who make up CEC. CEC monitors European policies meant to overcome these crises.	CEC ws	
- EU vs multiple crises (EEA, CEC, EEA)	The First Vice-President of COMECE, Mgr Jean Kockerols, outlined the concerns, facts and convictions of the Catholic Church in the migration issue. “This crisis has undermined unity in Europe, and, admittedly, also within the churches in Europe.	COM ECE news	No 1
- European values are threatened by crises (CEC)	In his opening speech to the COMECE Autumn Plenary Assembly, the President of COMECE, Cardinal Reinhard Marx, said that the Church wanted to make a contribution to help the European Union to overcome the multiple crises it faces: ‘In this existential crisis of the EU, COMECE is more important than ever’.	COM ECE news	No 2
	But we see Europe is being shaken. So many of our certainties are disappearing. Whole towns and regions feel left behind economically. People are angry.	EEA news	No 2
	Europe’s challenges are huge. Lord, please be merciful. And help us to step forward as salt and light, to play our part and pointing people to you, the King of Kings.	EEA news	No 2
	Many of the values which are seen as having contributed to the shaping of Europe during the past sixty years or so, such as solidarity with the weak and respect for human rights, seem to evaporate under the pressure of multiple crises. The churches in Europe must seek to uphold these values as an indispensable basis for justice and peace on our continent.	CEC 2016	P 6
	Europe in general and the European Union in particular is facing multiple crises. Some are global (such as the economic down turn) and geopolitical in nature (such as the wars in Syria and Iraq, and the ‘frozen conflict’ in eastern Ukraine). Other crises are due to issues that are more directly related to EU policies, (such as the Euro crisis) and the lack of an effective EU-wide policy on refugees who want to enter the EU. These simultaneously occurring crises impact the continent in a dramatic way.	CEC 2016	P 6

Chapter 4.4.4. Vision for Europe

<i>realization of the common good</i>	Seeking Christ-like transformation in Europe, the European Evangelical Alliance serves as the dynamic centre for equipping and resourcing, the European wide trusted Evangelical voice, and the connecting hub for greater strategic impact.	EEA ws	
- Mentioned by COMECE, EEA, CEC, EHF	It has an ambitious goal – to pave the way for far greater Gospel impact in Europe by 2020 – because we have changed attitudes towards religious freedom, and because we have renewed Evangelical confidence in the Gospel and in our ability to share it, no matter what happens. Europe’s Evangelicals will be effective Good News People.	EEA ws	
- Christian understanding of common			

<p>good (EEA, CEC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evangelising Europe (EEA) - European humanism (COMECE, EHF, CEC - No reference to a higher being (EHF 	Above all I [CEC President Rt Rev. Christopher Hill] hope the churches – including our partners in the Catholic Church – will be able to revitalize a vision for Europe much broader than the mere economic, a vision informed by a Christian understanding of society which looks to the common good of all, supporting human rights and inclusive communities without collapsing into purely individualistic demands, and understands (from the inside of faith) the need for dialogue between faiths and all people of good will.	CEC news	No 6
	The Conference of European Churches affirms that churches, civil society, and political institutions can contribute to unity and peacebuilding for the sake of Europe and the fellowship of humankind.	CEC news	No 9
	Before the major challenges of today the Church can and must contribute to “the rebirth of a worn Europe, which is still rich with energy and potential”, in view of “a new European humanism, a relentless humanization process that requires memory, courage, sound and human utopia.” (Pope Francis to the members of the European Parliament and on the occasion of the conferral of the Charlemagne Prize)	COM ECE news	No 2
	Europe and the EU are a task for all, because we will only be able to build a good future if the nations of Europe are united. It also raises the question on the way to achieve the “true European humanism” to which Pope Francis has encouraged the Europeans in his speech at the Charlemagne Prize Ceremony.	COM ECE news	No 5
	Europe has changed so much in the past few decades that one can talk about a New Europe (NEWrope). Re-evangelising is not enough. It needs new-evangelising.	EEA news	No 3
	Together, we can shape a Europe that is inclusive, open, just, sustainable, and that works for people of all ages, social backgrounds and nations.	EHF news	No 3
	We hope that other government leaders will join him and dare to change direction to finally engage in building a humane, social, solidary and fair Europe.	EHF news	No 4
	Therefore, it is not going too far to consider the present fundamental challenges to the European cooperation project as a Kairos moment—a crucial moment of truth—for the future of the Europe	CEC 2016	P 11
	I like to tease Christians sometimes by asking the question: do you believe that the situation of the church in Europe today is similar to the situation of Israel in Jerusalem or in Babylon. Now, Babylon provokes a series of negative images but really, if you look at the situation of Israel, a people of exiles in Babylon they were terrified about the situation they lived in. It was a cruel and horrible regime they were under but they revived this command from God, we can find it in Jeremiah, chapter 29, to seek the welfare of the city where they are exiled. So, the calling for the people who are exiled in the Old Testament is to focus on what is good around them, what is good that can come from them, from their people, good intentions for the country where they are, the city where they are. In the New Testament Peter compares the church to exiles, exiles of Israel. He also recognizes the fact that non-Christians would recognize the good in the Christian community. It really is the same kind of logic. It is important for us as Christians that the bible encourages us to serve our neighbor, to understand that our identity as a people of God, as a worshipping community, is an identity of a people who is scattered among the nations and also called to seek the welfare to the cities, the places where God sent us.	EEA news	No 1
	The European Humanist Federation holds that citizenship in a democratic European Union cannot be based on religious convictions or statements based on some form of transcendence.	EHF 2007	P 10

	This project is not just a way of thinking. First of all it is a way of being	COM ECE 2016	P 14
<i>promoting values in the world</i>	In the hope that a united Europe can take a stronger role on the world stage, COMECE together with Justice and Peace Europe aims to assist the EU in its vocation to promote global peace and assume its responsibility for supporting sustainable development and social justice across the world.	COM ECE ws	
- Mentioned by COMECE, BIC, CEC, EHF			
- EU has vocation to promote its values (COMECE, CEC)	How can Europe's efforts at integration be consolidated, and how can Europe learn together with others how to promote peace and security among the wider community of nation	BIC ws	
- EU has to promote values not necessarily European (BIC, COMECE)	Europe must continually rediscover its identity as a project for peace, democracy, and human rights. "This can happen only in transparent interaction for the good of all humanity," remarked Fr Heikki Huttunen, general secretary of the Conference of European Churches. "The prosperity and progress of Europe is possible only together with the peaceful development of its closest neighbours—Africa and the Middle East."	CEC news	No 9
- EU has a moral responsibility in the world (COMECE, EHF)	The 50th anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome is an opportunity to reflect on the values that in future might conduce to the construction of a political, social and cultural Europe that could help produce peace, stability and a vision of the future	EHF 2007	P 5
	The world, caught between armchair strategy and the facts on the ground, is rapidly exhausting its material and moral reserves, without any offsetting enhancement of its creative potential in the realms of emotion, the spirit, knowledge and reason. So is this not a suitable time to seek a new balance between material frugality and emotional and cultural appetites? And the task of evaluating and promoting European values that link invention, resolution and a forward-looking humanism would seem to be open to the supporters of participative democracy.	EHF 2007	P 6
	The European Union and its Member States have a particular responsibility to also share and promote universal values beyond their borders. This is not only a legal commitment but also a moral responsibility.	COM ECE 2016	P 13
<i>global player</i>	In the hope that a united Europe can take a stronger role on the world stage, COMECE together with Justice and Peace Europe aims to assist the EU in its vocation to promote global peace and assume its responsibility for supporting sustainable development and social justice across the world.	COM ECE ws	
- Mentioned by COMECE and BIC			
- EU needs to take a strong role on a global stage (COMECE, BIC)	At the same time, the growing interdependence of the community of nations continues to shape Europe's roles and responsibilities on the global stage, and exerts a profound influence on its internal dynamics.	BIC ws	
- EH has to help poor peoples (COMECE)	Pope John Paul II underlined this by saying that "Europe cannot close in on itself. It cannot and must not lose interest in the rest of the world. On the contrary, it must remain fully aware of the fact that other countries, other continents, await its bold initiatives, in order to offer to poorer peoples the means for their growth and social organisation, and to build a more just and fraternal world" and thus "to build peace within its borders and throughout the world".	COM ECE 2016	P 13
<i>unified Europe</i>	To assist the Bishops' Conferences of the EU reflect upon the challenges posed by the construction of a unified Europe, and to foster collegiality among them in developing specific actions, inspired by their pastoral experience, to deal with social and ethical problems of significance throughout the EU.	COM ECE ws	
- Mentioned by COMECE, EEA, CEC			
- Foster European ties (COMECE, EEA, CEC)	Europe's transition from a war-torn region to a project of peace is a testimony of humanity's ability to transcend long-standing conflicts in pursuit of a collective good.	BIC ws	

- Unity is the only way for EU in the future (COMECE)	The European Union is a project of community and solidarity. A conscious withdrawal of a member is therefore painful and has consequences for all. The existing cultural and spiritual ties should be preserved, used and reinforced in the future.	COM ECE news	No 5
- Strengthening EU integration while maintaining diversity (CEC)	Europe and the EU are a task for all, because we will only be able to build a good future if the nations of Europe are united.	COM ECE news	No 5
	Renewed cooperation and unity across denominational and ethnical boundaries on the European level, setting an example of humility and repentance for nations and the local level.	EEA news	No 3
	The Eurozone cannot indefinitely survive as a half-completed project—a monetary without an economic union.	CEC 2016	P 9
	The Union as a “super state” is, certainly in the foreseeable future, not feasible, if it would be desirable at all. However, a Europe characterised by, and based on multiple identities would be a good basis for developing joint policies towards common issues, and for a win-win situation for all those involved.	CEC 2016	P 12

8.3. Expert Interviews

8.3.1. Questionnaire

Opening:

- Thanking for participation
- Asking for consent to record the call
- Personal introduction and research interest

1. Personal introduction of the expert (position, professional self-image)

- First I would like to ask you to introduce yourself and your profession at the [organization]

2. Stimulation of a self-acting presentation (convictional lobbying in the EU)

- Why is it important to represent the [organization] to the EU?
- How does the [organization] want to influence/change EU policy?
- What interest does the [organization] represent?

3. Request for further exemplary explanations

- Orientation towards previous telling
- Can you give me examples?

4. Exmanent requests

I. Promotion of religious content

- Transition: I would also like to know what distinguishes you, a representative from a religious/philosophical institution, from other types of interest representatives in the EU, such as companies or NGOs.
- Some religious/philosophical representatives prefer to represent the individual interests of their institutions and members. Others focus rather on general goals concerning the common good in Europe. On a scale from 1 (institutional interest) to 5 (general goals), where would you place the [organization]?

II. Cooperation among convictional lobbyists

- (Transition: I would also like to know some general aspects about convictional lobbying in the EU)
- Do you cooperate with representatives of other religious or philosophical institutions in the EU? With whom and where?
 - With COMECE and CEC?
 - With other Christian organizations?

- With Institutions of other religious backgrounds?
- With institutions of other philosophical backgrounds?
- Would you say that you promote comparable/consistent contents? With who and concerning what?
- Would you cooperate with any religious representatives in the EU regardless of their specific religious or philosophical background?
- Are there any religious representatives who promote conflicting contents? Who and concerning what?
- Does the EU prefer a specific religion or denomination in its negotiations about values?
- Philosophical organizations complained of being disadvantaged. Would you agree on that?

III. Influence of convictional lobbying (request for theorization)

- Is there a European identity? On what is it be based on?
- Is there a civil religion in the EU?
- Does the [organization] aspires a European identity based on .../civil religion?
- Do religions contribute to it?
- Does religious/philosophical lobbying contribute to it?

Closing:

- Do you have something in mind we did not talk about yet?
- Thanking for participation

8.3.2. Expert 1

- | | |
|----|---|
| 5 | I: So, first of all I would like to ask you to introduce yourself and your profession at the [organization]. |
| 6 | E1: Yes, my name is [name] and I'm the Brussels's representative of the [organization], which means that I head up the Brussels's office of the [organization] and I'm in charge of the communication with the EU institutions and also with other civil society organizations including religious organizations and our role is also to provide information about debates, relevant debates to our membership |
| 7 | I: So, to [organization]'s members, like citizens? |
| 8 | E1: Yes, our members are organizations only. We have more than 15 members, we have about 33 which are called National [organizations] and they bring together individuals and/or churches and other [denominational] organizations. On the other hand, we have another category of members called agencies which are national or transnational [denominational] organization specialized on a certain area of service or work... so education, accrediting organizations, professional organizations, etc. |
| 9 | I: And why is it important to represent the [organization]'s interest at an EU level? |
| 10 | E1: Well the organization itself was founded in 1846 so 170 years ago and back than the idea that providing together a joint voice or joint representation of the Christian worldview as understood and experienced by [denomination's followers] was something of value. The Brussels's office itself was founded in 1994 with a due to provide understanding to [denomination's followers] across Europe about developments within the EU but also providing a voice to [denomination's followers] within the development of the European policy to prepare on certain debates. |
| 11 | Back in the 1840s, religious freedom or freedom of conscience, freedom of religion or belief was an issue of concern and it has remained so. So, we have a fairly broad and encompassing understanding of freedom of religion or belief and promoting it and defending it is one of the priorities that we have. |
| 12 | But another one for instance is our engagement with refugee issues so we launched a couple of years ago a campaign which is now called the 'refugee campaign' and my role, one of my roles in that campaign is to help the 20 million [denomination's followers] across Europe understand what the EU says about it or what is happening all over Europe and also represent the voice of these people in the European institutions when it comes to legislation, or agreements. |
| 13 | I: The voice of the refugees right now? |
| 14 | E1: Yes. Yes, actually the voice of [denomination's followers] with regard to refugee issues which |

includes representing the refugees for those who work with the refugees.

-
- 15 I: Right. So, do I understand right: your position is to inform both, the members you are representing and the EU about the people you want to represent?
-
- 16 E1: Yes. And I am getting involved in the relevant faces of decision making within the EU.
-
- 17 I: I would also like to know what distinguishes you, a representative of a religious institution from other types of interest representatives, such as companies or NGOs.
-
- 18 E1: Well, one difference with the companies is of course that we are not a 'for-profit organization'. Our finances rely on fees from our members and revenue from our own activities. But the philosophy of self-understanding of our organization would not differ so much from other civil society organizations. What sets us apart from many other players is that we are truly a representative body and a member body of member bodies, so our members have members themselves who are representatives of [denominational] movements within their nations. So, we can safely say that we do represent the people we represent, whereas other NGOs tend to represent only their members or only the issue that they work on.
-
- 19 So that would be a main difference and that's also one of the reasons why the EU considers that the role of organized religion is so significant, because it does represent an entire section of society, individuals, certain kind of thinking and format in the society as well.
-
- 20 E1: I know that this self-understanding is not universal and is not across the board. The [organization] or [denomination's followers] would see themselves as part of civil society. If you had to interview with COMECE for example, they would not have the same answer. They believe that because they represent the church, or a church, they have a distinctly different nature which we can understand but seen from a purely legal standpoint it's hard, it's a hard case to make. So, we would see ourselves as a movement within civil society, distinct but part of civil society.
-
- 21 I: But still distinguished in a way that you represent general goals and not specific issues like you mentioned like for example an NGO specialized on something, on environmental protection or something like that.
-
- 22 E1: Yes, exactly.
-
- 23 I: I would also like to know something about the cooperation among religious or convictional lobbyists in the EU. Do you cooperate or form alliances with representatives of other religions or philosophical institutions in the EU?
-
- 24 E1: Yes.
-
- 25 I: Do you have preferred cooperation partners?
-
- 26 E1: We tend not to insist the facts and the interest we have to guide this. We have a closer cooperation with other Christian organizations or churches but not only. I mean we founded about 10 years ago a platform in Brussels called 'The European platform against religious intolerance and discrimination' and it was founded by 3 [denominational] organizations, but from the start we wanted it to be open and today it includes Buddhist representation, a Jewish organization, a secular organization, a Mormon organization, a Bahai organization. So, it's a very, very ... The top of the lines, we tend to vary according to the interest or issue that we are working on.
-
- 27 I: So, you would also cooperate with secular organizations? You mentioned already, they are also part of this union, like for example the Humanists which do not prefer religion entering politics.
-
- 28 E1: Yes, actually we have this philosophy we are calling 'Co-belligerence', which basically means fighting together and this philosophy pretends that if we find an agreement with another movement or organization to retain a certain general goal, we would be open to working with them even though mind we differ on other issues.
-
- 29 I: And in general, would you say that religious organizations have comparable interest or promote comparable content to the EU?
-
- 30 E1: You mean between themselves? That's an interesting question. In my understanding, generally yes
-

even though I must say that the confession of the organization tends to dictate the type of approach the organization has to the EU and the type of issues the organization would be working on. So, a Jewish organization for instance depending on its own self-perception and its own theology or philosophy would approach the institutions differently than a Muslim organization or a Roman Catholic organization. Generally speaking, I would say that the Christian organizations tend to have the same kind of approach and you can add to that the Mormons. I would say the Jewish organizations are special in their kind, because you have religious Jewish organizations and secular Jewish organizations

-
- 31 I: Do you mean political ones, representing the interest of Israel?
-
- 32 E1: No, not necessarily Israel. No, but the interest of Jews in Europe and Jewish people. The secular Jewish organizations would indeed have less an insistence on Israel and would tackle issues more from a universalist point of view. It's a bit more Humanistic. The confessional religious Jewish organizations will work a bit more on things like Antisemitism or religious freedom for Jewish people. And, indeed, talk a bit more about Israel, the perception of Israel. That's the difference I see among the Jews.
-
- 33 Muslims, I have to say, tend to have a quite weak representation in the European institutions. There has been quite a lot of work on Islamophobia in the last two years but that hasn't been really followed up. So, I don't see many Muslim representatives to the meetings I go to.
-
- 34 I: Might it be possible that they cannot organize a common voice? There are too many different denominations ...
-
- 35 E1: Yes, that's for sure, that's my analyses. I think there is partly a sociological explanation to that, because of the socio-economic make-up of the Muslims in Europe who tend to be lower class and middle class. A lot of them came as low skilled workers in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. The self-organization of the movement has been made more difficult because of that. Also, Islam in Europe is heavily influenced by cultures from outside of Europe. So, the Asian Muslims, and the Arab Muslims, and the Turkish Muslims, and the African Muslims do not have the same kind of approach. So even Arabs from North Africa and Arabs from the Middle East are not the same, so that also makes it more difficult.
-
- 36 I: Another question would be: are there any conflicts between religious organizations, like a conflict line going through the different representatives?
-
- 37 E1: Yes, perhaps not conflicts but certainly disagreements or unwillingness to work together on certain issues.
-
- 38 I: Do you have a certain issue in mind?
-
- 39 E1: Well, for sure. Catholics and Protestants do not have the same approach on family policy depending on the Protestant confession of course but CEC and COMECE tend not to work together on such issues, there are doctrinal differences, whereas the East Orthodox, the Catholics and the Evangelicals tend to have a more similar approach. So that's one example. And issues related to bioethics are sometimes a source of disagreements among Christian organizations. I mean, if you're one on the scope, there are even more areas of disagreement, but also strong areas of convergence.
-
- 40 I: Which are the areas of convergence?
-
- 41 E1: Social rights, the fight against poverty, the protection of migrants and weak people, the protection of children, freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion or belief, environmental issues. There is a lot of agreement around these issues.
-
- 42
-
- 43 I: Now another question: do you think the EU or the EU citizens have a common identity?
-
- 44 E1: My answer to that is a 'Yes'. It's a non-perceived common identity.
-
- 45 I: What is it based on?
-
- 46 E1: Well, I heard a preacher saying once that sometimes culture is like water for a fish. They are breathing it but they are not really conscious that water exists, just because they're in it. I think our approach to things like democracy, human rights, a value for arts and culture, the Christian roots, or the Christian
-

values that have shaped the culture in Europe are things that really are shared across the continent.

-
- 47 I: So, do you think there supposed to be an EU identity? Is it something positive or rather something, which is just there... neutral?
-
- 48 E1: I think there is something that can be identified as a European culture. Yes, absolutely. But also, the difficulty of Europe, some philosophers would say, is that Europe is the continent that invented universalism. What is commonly understood as universal in Europe is not necessarily as universal and perhaps a bit specific to Europe. So, Europeans have a hard time identifying a European identity, just because they perceive the European identity or once distinct about Europe as universal.
-
- 49 I: And do you think religion could contribute to it or could change it or influence it, like religious activism?
-
- 50 E1: Yes, I think religion has contributed tremendously to the formation of European identity or a set of European virtues. Religious communities being centers of reflection, questioning, critique, philosophy these are ideals places to ask the right questions and perhaps even revive European identity because religions are story telling machines, they are poetry in community, they can generate vision and therefore I think they have a powerful role but they're not the only ones. What is distinct about religious organizations or religious communities is that they still connect a lot of people regardless of whether or not people are like active practicing or believers.
-
- 51 I: There are also organizations, I mentioned before, secular organizations representing non-believers interest. Would you consider them as something comparable to religious organizations?
-
- 52 E1: I would say 'Yes' and 'No'. Yes, in so far as they represent a worldview or a set of worldviews and 'no' in so far as they tend to not really represent communities. They tend to represent currents of opinion or currents of virtues in a society but no really communities. That's a difference. I mean it's the fact, recognizing God or not recognizing God is not even an issue. I mean in my working experience I've come across Hindu or Buddhist organizations. Buddhists in Europe, not in Asia but in Europe, tend not to see themselves as a religious movement. But they do represent communities and I think that makes them distinct from non-confessional organizations, like secular Humanists.
-
- 53 I: And do you think religious organizations represent rather the interest of their communities or do they have an ambition, like the common good?
-
- 54 E1: That's a good question. I think there is one organization we are doing with... This is purely my perspective on this but I think that a good number of religious organizations tend to work for the common good. There is of course, I belief a legitimate, a degree of defending their own interest or representing their own interest. But in several areas of policy they tend to take a common good approach. For example, in matters to do with religious freedom, today most of religious organizations would advocate for universal religious freedom. For some religious movements, it's more difficult but in general, there is more a sort of universal approach to it.
-
- 55 I: The [organization] on a scale, if there is a scale from 1 to 5 and 1 stands for institutional interest or interest of your member organizations and 5 would be general goals and the common good, where would you position the [organization]?
-
- 56 E1: Probably at 4. I think we would specifically address the interest of [denomination] only if there is a specific case that is especially concerning to the [denominational] public.
-
- 57 I mean if I can tell you a story. I told you the [organization] as a movement was founded in 1846. It was in London and, by the way, the Americans were kicked out back in those days, because some American [denomination's followers] still supported slavery, so they were told they could not join the [organization]. In the 1850s a campaign for religious freedom was launched. This campaign was provoked by the fact that the Swedish government at that time had decided to deport or expel a group of Swedish women who had converted from Lutheranism to Catholicism. The [organization], and that was a very first ort of public policy campaign of the [organization], decided to send a delegation to the Prussian ambassador in Sweden to ask him to advocate for religious freedom for these women. At that time, you could not become a Catholic and remain a Swedish citizen. The campaign was to protect these women who had converted to Catholicism, not to [denomination] clearly, for the religious freedom of a group,
-

which is not your group.

-
- 58 I: So, the virtue of religious freedom is more important than the own religious interest or the interest of the own group.
-
- 59 E1: Yes.
-
- 60 I: Well, that were all of my questions. Thank you very much! Do you have something in mind we did not talk about yes or what you would like to mention?
-
- 61 E1: I was interested in reading about the presentation of your research about civil religion. That was interesting. Back in the days, when I was student, I wrote a paper on that, too. The comparison of civil religion in America and France.
-
- 62 I: Interesting. Did you have a result?
-
- 63 E1: Yes, it was very interesting. It was back in the days of George Bush Junior. I was comparing civil religion and the role of president Bush's faith and [denomination] in the states. Their influence on civil religion and the way anti-Iraq war and terrorism was framed in North America and civil religion in France. It's the question, if there is such a thing like a civil religion in France which is a secular country and my conclusion was yes. It's a secularized republican version of civil religion but they do have rituals and symbols and all the rest, also wider narratives. And what I did is to compare the French civil religion narratives and the American on issues of international relations, such as war or religious diversity and things like that.
-
- 64 I: So, may I ask you directly: do you think there is a civil religion in the EU?
-
- 65 E1: I don't think so. I think that's one of the weaknesses of the EU but it's a very understandable one. The EU does not have a political culture. A unified political culture. It's a very recent organization and the narrative inspirational nature of the EU disappeared or was eclipsed very quickly by the common market and economic interest.
-
- 66 I: And do you think there would be a chance to construct such a civil religion?
-
- 67 E1: Oh Yeah, I'm definite about it. But I know for a fact that EU institutions are really fighting or are struggling, is a better word, really struggling to come up with what they call a new narrative for Europe. It's hard, because there is some form of competition with national cultures and national civil religions and traditions. The challenge is to create a common sense of belonging and story and symbols and whatever identifies Europe as Europe. ??? as a friend of mine says without giving national communities the impression that Europe is threatening on their identity.
-
- 68 The biggest difficulty I belief, I'm going back to my earlier comments, is to identify things we belief to be universal as Europeans and it's hard for us, because for us it's natural and it's everywhere, like democracy, or criticism of power, or separation of power. Things like that actually emerged in Europe but we belief that they are universal goods. So, it's hard to label them as European.
-
- 69 I: And do you think religious lobbyists could contribute to this awareness ... I guess I asked already something similar but now I would like to ask regarding civil religion: Do you think religious lobbyists can contribute to a civil religion?
-
- 70 E1: I think so. I think so.
-
- 71 I: That was my research question.
-
- 72 E1: Well, it was fast. I have resolved your question. No. I think so, I really do think so. But we are facing another problem which is the level of religious illiteracy in public institutions in Europe, a lack of understanding of religion and a kind of fear because of secularization. There is a misunderstanding that religious cannot really play a role. And that's a wide spread understanding. The fact is, I can see it firsthand that when I meet officials from the European Commission, they understand that religious organizations have a strong inspiring power and the institutions lack this inspiring power.
-
- 73 I: And also, religious organizations have a community like you mentioned before.
-

74 E1: Yes, exactly. So, they can reverberate a message among their communities.

75 I: Ok. Thank you very much for taking the time.

76 E1: My pleasure. And all the best for your research.
I: Thank You.

8.3.3. Expert 2

1 I: First I would like to ask if you could introduce yourself and your profession at the [organization].

2 E2: Yes, my name is [name] and I am the president of the [organization]. This is an organization established in 2010, composed by Europeans who had entered Islam, who came from other religions. Since almost 7 years we European Muslims met and we started to think how to avoid the clash of civilization. This is maybe the second point, regarding my degrees in economics and international relations I was a very strong Christian and I don't call myself converted to Islam but I belief in the Tora, the Gospel and the Bible and I belief in the Koran, so I decide accomplish my religion choosing for the last religion: Islam. So, one day I noticed, with all the experiences of international relations, many people have given me the task to establish this organization and then I have been elected president.

3 I: Why do you think it is important to represent the [organization] to the EU?

4 E2: It is very important to represent the [organization], because we have to have also a voice. Recently, I can tell you that it is very important what you are saying. I just came back from Strasbourg where the Council of Europe has asked me to become expert advisor. Actually, I went there and I explained many things. I was not alone, because they invite many religious leaders from all Europe and besides this many diplomats and ministers of foreign affairs of many countries like Russia or like other countries. I was invited as a representance of the [organization], so of course I can tell you that it's important for the European institutions to listen directly form ourselves what is our necessity and how we can work together to prevent a clash not only of the civilization but also of all religions, especially in this particular moment. Am I clear to you?

5 Yes. So do understand right, your main goal is to avoid a clash of civilizations, a clash of cultures?

6 E2: Yes, we have 3 main goals. First of all is to have a strong link with not-Muslims, because Islamophobia is increasing. Many people confuse migrants with terrorists, and with Muslims. Of course, Islam is not equivalent with Jihad, with terrorism, because we want that our new Muslims study, that they read Islam, that they read a religion of peace and we teach them not to go to the internet to learn religion but to get the sources directly from the main books. So this is very important.

7 The second is to establish a link, a strong relation with the institutions and with the Vatican, with Christian organizations and religious leaders. This is important, because we don't want only to be a passive actors or stakeholders but we want to be in the process of stabilization of Europe, to be active actors in this panorama, in this context that is of course very different.

8 There is a new issue now that many people focalize in integration. I don't want to say integration. I want to say a new word that is 'inclusion', because if I am an Italian I go to Germany or to England. Of course, I like to eat my pizza, my spaghetti for example. No one has to oblige me to drink a beer if I don't want or a hot dog. So, each one has cultural background and religion I think. When the religion is not against the constitution or the law it is a personal faith that has to be respected.

9 I agree with the French conception of Libert  ,   galit  , and Fraternit   but I don't agree with the idea of   galit   considering that everyone is equal. So, I said to them that it is very important to support for example the women who go to the beach with the bikini but also the girls with freedom who go by their own choice with the burkini because during the last 6 month many girls have been stopped by the police. I said that the state has to support and to respect the minorities. I think if you deal with equality this reduction is not really a work of the state. The government has to protect all the laws but also the individuals. You get what I am saying?

10 We have to notice that we don't have to be shocked because women go with the burkini to the beach but we have to be really shocked how the women as being emancipated struggle to obtain freedom. The

freedom to go to the beach. This is a very important step. Those are not women who stay in the house and their husbands say 'No, you don't go out'. If you want to cover yourself because you have your own thinking about your body ok but you don't have to be obliged by the argument to be in the house. Of course, you want to go out and go to the beach and they say not. I think this is not freedom. The state imposed the women not to go to the beach because of the burkini. This is one important point.

-
- 11 Coming back to [organization]. The last 7 years we have been invited from many governments and ministries of foreign affairs. We have met a lot of people, presidents of republics, ministers of foreign affairs. We have been selected twice to go to Vatican to speak in front of many ambassadors and the Italian government also. In Italy and in Switzerland the governments respect us because we have done a lot of work for the prevention of conflict. This is very important. Especially, because inside of our organization 99% of the people are originally from Europe. We don't have to defend the Arabs, Pakistani, etc. but of course as Europeans we can understand each other better than to speak with someone Asian who has completely different background. One Italian is different from a German but in the end we can manage.
-
- 12 I: So do I understand right that you promote rather cultural diversity inside of Europe than a specific European culture?
-
- 13 E2: Of course, we want first to support interfaith dialogue. Nowadays, there is also the issue of intrafaith dialogue. We have too many problems between Sunni and Shia. 90% are Sunni and 10 % Shia, especially from the Iran. There is a big war now in Syria, in Iran, with this problem and many Muslims are killed. Of course, we support the minorities, because we are a minority in Europe. We support that fact that each one has to live with his own religion and each religion has the right and the duty, the responsibility to avoid the conflict. Most of the wars now are made from people that are not religious that don't live their religion, like the Islamic State. They are only terrorists. They don't really know the Islam. It's a shame. We are very frustrated about this.
-
- 14 I: I would also like to know what distinguishes you, a representative from a religious institution, from other types of interest representatives in the EU like for example companies or NGOs?
-
- 15 E2: First of all, the good thing is that we are volunteers. Each of us does voluntary support with our money, with our time. This is very important. This means that we have no support from the government or any kind of association, any kind of thinking. This gives us the opportunity to be nothing like a flag. We are really struggling for peace, we are struggling to support the Christians, because it is our aim to support also the Christians when they escape from Muslims. This is I think a completely new idea, a completely new concept we really practice with a lot of efforts. Then of course, I don't want to say we are better than the others. We just are different.
-
- 16 I: I would also like to know if you cooperate with other representatives of religious institutions in the EU like for example with other Muslim representatives.
-
- 17 E2: We are in cooperation in particular with the mosques, with the Islamic centre in each country. We can collaborate, we can meet each other... you know we call it mosque but it is no mosque... anyway, the Islamic centre. We are going there to make lessons. We start from the base. Ok, we are going to the television we participate in international conferences, we give interviews in the radio, TV, and newspaper but first of all we go to the Islamic centres and speak with the people. We speak also to the immigrants about how to respect the constitution, how to respect the law and how to interpret good the Koran, the Islam. This is what is different from the others.
-
- 18 What is also different, that we have been nominated to be ambassadors of peace worldwide. If you go to our website, you can see that we have ambassadors in many countries all over the world. There was a minister of Islamic affairs in Senegal who now is our ambassador.
-
- 19 Our general secretary is a woman. To give a lot of perspective to the women. That is what they apparently say now. They say 'Oh, you treat bad the women. The woman is under the men'. That is of course a silly thing. We nominated the secretary general who is a English journalist who was captured by the Taliban and then she became a Muslim. Now she is our general secretary. She defends the rights of the women. She defends the interfaith dialog. She is a very active woman who goes everywhere in the world. So you are very happy now?
-

- 20 I: Well, for me its more interesting the cooperation on a European level. If you go to European institutions...
-
- 21 E2: We have now just started with the Council of Europe and they said to us that we can go every time they have a meeting but now we are waiting to cooperate more active. I spoke to them just 2 or 3 month ago with a high level, I think it is the one of the top, who said to me after we saw each other 'Ok, it is very important what you are doing but we want you here at least once a month'. 'Ok' I said, if you want we come together, there is no problem, but now we are waiting for them. We are very active everywhere but on a European level we are waiting for this ambassador that belongs to the government of the European country but it's very important what they say. So this is the fact.
-
- 22 So you cooperate on a European level also with other organization, with COMECE for example, or the EFL?
-
- 23 E2: Yes, we cooperate with the Buddhist, the Christian, the Jewish. Of course, we need to cooperate with them. Me especially, I am nominated now from the ????. There is a new cooperational international center from the ???part of Genova where we make agreements with all organizations. This is a very very important cooperation. Also in Albania, we have cooperation. They cooperate with the Albanian embassy. In the Balkan, we have a deputy of the Kosovo Parliament that is our member. So, we have also high rank political diplomats, members, who are making a lot of efforts. We have also one in Portugal, one minister in the government. So we have normal persons but also VIPs.
-
- 24 I: Would you say that the [organization] and the other religious representatives, like you mentioned Buddhist and Christians, have comparable interest concerning European politics or comparable contents which they try to promote?
-
- 25 E2: Actually, we are not deeply in politics, especially we are more diplomats. Ok, some of our members are politicians but I told them 'If you want to make your own politics in your country don't mix religion and...' but ok if its from Kosovo, it is a Muslim country, so I think there it is no problem. On the other level they are more diplomats, you know advisors from governments on a diplomatic level. We are actually not involved in politics, because it is really our aim not to be involved in politics but into diplomacy, because in politics you are with one party against the other. No, no, we are with all the politicians. We are with all the people. Our enemy is no one. Our enemy is the war, the terrorism. We are not involved in politics. This is it not at all. In diplomacy, yes.
-
- 26 For example, here in Italy, Liga Norte. It is one party here against migrants, against the Islam. Even though they are against us we respect them. We send them our program and invitations to our conferences. What we can do of course? Each one has its own interest, its own purpose and they are not like us but we respect them.
-
- 27 So, you cooperate with everybody, doesn't matter which background they have?
-
- 28 E2: With everyone. Even with the Jewish we cooperate, with the Rabbis, with everybody. We have many friends. Also in Argentina, we are linked with organizations who defend the Jews in the war. I was personally there in Buenos Aires. This is a very very good opportunity.
-
- 29 I: I would also like to ask: do you think there is a common identity in Europe?
-
- 30 E2: Of what, of Muslims or...?
-
- 31 I: No of Europe, of the European citizens. Is there a common identity?
-
- 32 E2: Of course, we know that what is linked to us each other is the Euro, the money. But I think the new generation, the young, university students, Erasmus, also the new migrants. We are more linked, because we are suffering. Today there is a big problem all over Europe: it is the work. The young people don't have work. Of course, I think we are more linked than before. Before in the 2000s it was only about money but today. Of course, we don't like the burocracy of Europe. On one sense, it is nice that they control us. Our governments don't do this. But it is something about economics. About the people, I think we are more close to each other. Especially, the young people. Especially the new generation.
-
- 33 I: And do you think the [organization] should contribute to a European identity?
-

- 34 E2: Absolutely yes. That is what we are doing. It is very important for us to contribute to democracy, to stability in our loved Europe. Each one of us, in England, Portugal, in the Balkan, in France everywhere. They have to do something to cooperate and to respect each other in diversity. Now we are a minority but even as a majority we have to cooperate. This is our land. This is the future for us, for our children and for everyone.
-
- 35 I: Ok, those were my questions. Thank you very much!
-
- 36 E2: Thank you. I hope it was enough information for you and you are satisfied.
I: Yeah, it's very interesting.
-

8.3.4. Expert 3

- 1 I: First I would like to ask you to introduce yourself and your profession at the [organization]?
-
- 2 E3: My name is [name] and I'm a lawyer. I have been head of the [organization] representation to the EU for the last 8 years.
-
- 3 I: Why is it important to represent the [organization] to the EU?
-
- 4 E3: The decision was already taken 27 years ago in the 90s because of EU legislation basically, which is affecting also the church's autonomy and as you know, the church in [country] is also a big employer and it is sort of profiting also from the state-church constellations allowing a right for self-determination for the churches in many areas and at that time there was a debate about the data protection directive and it turned out that also this sort of legislation directive from the EU can affect the churches and therefore it was seen as a need to be present in order to give the argumentation about a specific also constitutional status of the churches in [country].
-
- 5 but over the years this sort of priority has also a bit shifted because the EU gained more and more competences. It is not only the internal market anymore but also the asylum area. The EU did a lot of legislation also in the social field and the church also very much sees itself as an advocate for groups not having an own lobby organization in Brussels like refugees, like people who are socially marginalized. So we really do a lot of advocacy work, for example on the area of asylum and migration law when it comes to creating a social dimension of Europe.
-
- 6 Now, these days, we also try to engage the church in a debate about the future of Europe.
-
- 7 I: Do you have a concrete vision of the future of Europe?
-
- 8 E3: Well, of course the European states together that there are no further cracks. The Brits unfortunately opted for Brexit but we are very much arguing for togetherness in Europe and we also see our role as a church and as a member of the CEC very much in the ecumenical world and in a Europe which is united, because we feel that this togetherness will really help to face all the challenges, either terrorism or the social inequalities which are rising or the populist voices which are more and more gaining power. The future of Europe concerns us very much and we feel that the church is really asked to get involved also to defend the European values as they are in the treaty in the EU. Therefore, I think our vision is to have more Europe and also a better EU structure.
-
- 9 I: I would also like to know what distinguishes you, a representative of a religious institution from other types of interest representatives in the EU such as companies or NGOs or think tanks?
-
- 10
-
- 11 E3: As I said we are doing a lot of advocacy work for groups who don't have a lobby office here because they are marginalized and in general I would say we work for the common good. So, there is no financial interest behind our advocacy work. There is no sort of hidden agenda or compared to other organizations not only one interest focus but it's quite a broad focus. It is also trying to create an acceptance also for the ethical fundament the EU relies upon. So, it's not only the laws and regulations but it's also the feeling that Europe is needed and that it heads towards peace and stability. It's more a soft angle maybe but we consider it very important. We also see how easily the fundament gets cracks because people are working to destroy it.
-

- 12 I: Now in the beginning you mentioned institutional interest of the [organization] concerning data protection and now you talk also about general goals. If there is a scale from 1, institutional interest to 5, general goals, where would you position the [organization] on the content you promote?
-
- 13 E3: The institutional interest is as important as the general interest.
-
- 14 I: So, you say both is the same important.
-
- 15 E3: Yes. Because the institutional interest is a sort of prerequisites for the other work we are doing. So, if the church had not the autonomy granted also from the German constitutional law but also by European law, by article 17 TFEU, they could not do their social work, they could not do their advocacy work. So, it is a prerequisite to have this autonomy in order to also be present in other areas of society. So, it's very strongly interlinked.
-
- 16 I: Ah ok, thank you. The [organization] is a member of the CEC which is also cooperating with COMECE. Do you also form alliances with other confessions maybe outside of this groups and maybe also with other religious representatives of other religions?
-
- 17 E3: In Brussels unfortunately other religions, especially the Muslims, are not organized in a way the churches are. There is no European Muslim representation for example. Which is understandable, because there is not one Islam but there are different confessions in the Islam as well and it's very manifold. Therefore, unfortunately we don't have the same cooperation possibilities with Muslims.
-
- 18 When it comes to Jewish representatives, there are many organizations in Brussels but they do not have the broad outlook on EU affairs as we do. So they do not work for example on the common EU asylum system or on the European pillar of social rights to name some examples of our current work. Therefore, there are meetings but more on a diplomatic level for keeping in good contact but not really in the daily work.
-
- 19 I: Ok, and regarding the religions or confessions who are active in EU policy, would you say that you promote comparable interest or comparable goals?
-
- 20 E3: Yes, generally yes. I mean there are nowadays more and more also Evangelical organizations coming from United States which have a very strong agenda which is very much focused on being critical towards abortion rights, being critical about LGBTQ rights and being critical towards Muslims. So, this is not out agenda. So, we don't share this but I would say CEC and COMECE, the two organizations you named and then many other Christian organizations like Caritas or Jesuit refugee service. So, those who have been long established here. We work very close together except for some minor differences but we have basically the same approach.
-
- 21 I: There are also secular organizations with philosophical backgrounds not necessarily religious like the Humanist Federation. Do you also form alliances with this kind of organizations?
-
- 22 E3: We are also members of secular platforms, for example there is a platform about asylum and migration and there is also a French organization ran by the Humanists which is working on Human Rights. Both organizations we are members on this ?EPAMP? and there we are working also on the asylum agenda. I think in this regard there is a good cooperation but apart from that, as far as I see the EHF is also not so much into all these subjects as we are. We have never been approached to cooperate so therefore there is also no cooperation.
-
- 23 I: Would you say they defend comparable interest as religious organizations?
-
- 24 E3: I cannot really judge because they are really not so visible to me. I really don't know what they are working on with regard to EU policy generally speaking.
-
- 25 I: Sometimes they are complaining that the EU prefers to communicate with religious organizations and does not sufficiently consider non-believers in the EU. Would you share this impression?
-
- 26 E3: No. Also, when you see, even now under the Juncker Commission there is a high-level dialog and it is always one with religious representatives and one with humanists and freemasons. Then there are also many bilateral meetings, there is a contact person in the Parliament and a contact person in the Commission and as far as I understand their work they are very careful to be not only in touch with

religious representatives but also with representatives of non-religious organizations. I think it is a very common criticism which I have been hearing a lot but I cannot see that it is really justified and this is a bit a pity, because I think the humanists could be much more content wise engaged and it's a pity when all their contributions are focusing on being discriminated which I don't see is the point. It has maybe also to do with the representativity of their organizations when it comes to members.

-
- 27 I: Because they don't really have members, like the churches have members?
-
- 28 E3: Of course, they can say everybody who is a non-believer is our member but that's not the same. While the churches have a very clear system where you can see whether they are speaking for one million people or 20 million and I think this also makes a difference.
-
- 29 I: Besides the members would you see any more differences between both of the groups?
-
- 30 E3: Well, once are founding their work on the Bible and on Christ and the others don't relate their work to any higher being. Here in Brussels I felt very often I felt that... for example when there was the debate about a constitution for Europe I think that the churches have been very pro-European and really voiced they engagement very much while I really feel that on EU level, I cannot say on member state level, maybe it's different, but the humanists were not very constructive let's say.
-
- 31 I: I mentioned also in the beginning, there is very often expressed the need for a common European identity in the EU. Would you say that there is already a common identity?
-
- 32 E3: That's a very tricky question. I don't know. I don't think so. I mean we have so many different mentalities that we can see now in the refugee question that there that there is no common attitude towards helping people in need. We see it when it comes to the Brexit, when some member states even say that it's great that the Brits left and they would also like to join. So, they don't believe apparently anymore in working together. We see in foreign policies that it's very difficult to come...
-
- 33 and I think the identity question is even more complicated because all the states have a different history. I think it's a big task to work on a European identity and it still lies before us. It would be nice when European identity would mend to be open-minded, to be carrying for the other to not only think about 'Europe first' but really also to see the responsibility for the wider world but I think to claim that this was the European identity would be a bit too optimistic.
-
- 34 I: Does the [organization] want to contribute to the emergence of a European identity? Is this one goal of the [organization]?
-
- 35 E3: We want to contribute to the debate. I would think it is a little bit exaggerated as a national church to have this as a goal because Europe is very broad and as I said, very different. There is this saying that we want unity in diversity and I think this is very much also our experience in our ecumenical relationships. So we can share our experiences and I really hope that this contribution can inspire also others to keep on debating and to see the need to have this debate.
-
- 36 I: And do you see already a success, that religions can affect the common good or the unity in Europe, like strengthening the unity?
-
- 37 E3: Yes, I think the churches are still big entities who have many members, especially in Germany, they are very engaged and politically interested so I think the churches, and this is also what we are trying to do, use their partnership and work across borders which could be even done more than it is happening today. I think they are also a multiplayer of the European vision of unity in diversity and therefore it is important that churches have an interest about what is happening on an EU level and that they consider themselves also as a part of Europe.
-
- 38 I: So thank you very much, those were basically all the questions I had. Do you have something in mind we did not talk about yet or you would like to mention?
-
- 39 E3: Hm, Nein, mir fällt auch nichts mehr ein.
-
- 40 I: Ok, alles klar. Dann vielen Dank.
-

8.3.5. Expert 4

-
- 1 Because of technical difficulties, the first sentences of the interview have not been recorded.
-
- 2 I: And why is it so important to represent the [organization] to the EU?
-
- 3 E4: Well, I think one can really say that the churches in Europe from the very beginning were contributing and in favor of the process of unification and the coming together in Europe. That is true to the council of Europe but it's also true to the EU or at first time the Montanunion and all these developments because it was nearly from all of them seen as steps to peace and reconciliation in Europe.
-
- 4 The second issue is that also churches became more and more aware that there are areas, political areas, which are touched and formed and decided by the European institutions which are very much close related to issues where the churches are working on, for instance the questions of human rights or the questions of bioethics or the questions of ecology and climate change. What I try to work on are the questions of poverty and social exclusion and so on in Europe. That's why the churches said 'well it's good to have this office and a head quarter in Brussels to work on this issues in dialog with the European institutions'.
-
- 5 I: I would also like to know what distinguishes you, a representative of a religious institution, from other types of interest representatives in the EU, such as companies or NGOs?
-
- 6 I mean what is interesting is that sometimes, civil servants in the institutions, in the European Commission, also sometimes deputies in the EU Parliament say that the interesting point of the churches is that, of course they are arguing for specific areas, but they are coming from a perspective asking for the common good in Europe. So, they are not only thinking about this or that specific question but they try to formulate something like a vision of a common good in Europe. That might be a difference to other lobby groups. Not to all of them of course, but to some of them, or many of them even.
-
- 7 I: But still the [organization] is representing people with a specific religious background. Do you also have institutional interests, the interests of exactly these people, or is it only concerning the common good?
-
- 8 E4: Well, that is nearly now a philosophical question because one could always try to argue that even if you debate institutional issues you can have an approach on the common good. Ok, that's of course really a question for discussion. It's true that of course also the churches ask about developments in Europe concerning also their own organizational live. For instance, just to give you an example, you know probably the article 17 TEU? When it came to the discussion about this treaty which was first a discussion about a possible constitution for the EU, churches all over Europe were very much in favor of this article 17 because they have said it is important that they say already in the first paragraph of this article that the EU has no competence to deal with state-religion, state-church relation on the ground.
-
- 9 Because this state-religion and state-church relation is so different in Europe, because of the history, because of the culture. Therefore, we do not want the EU institutions have the competence to do law or legislation about that. If you look to Scandinavia, the church of Sweden, if you look to France, if you look to Germany, it's so different and we want to keep these differences in Europe. If you want that is an example where we as churches and the churches, we represent said 'that is about our own live as churches in Europe'. But of course, we would argue that at the end this is also, if you look to the principal of subsidiarity, this is also something where you can argue that it is also about the common good in Europe. The common good does not mean that everything has to be done by Brussels and so on. That mind be an answer to that kind of question.
-
- 10 I: I guess with this perception my next question is a little bit difficult. I would like to ask you, on a scale from 1 to 5, if 1 would be 'institutional interest' and 5 would be 'general goals' or the common good, in your daily practice where would you position the [organization]?
-
- 11 E4: I think than you can give a pretty 4 for that. If you look on our website you will find somewhere a work program until 2018 because then we have our next assembly. This is the highest legislative body for our organization. Than we give us always a road map for the next years about what we want to do. If you look at that you will find several areas of our work like human rights, peace building, economic justice, employment, bioethics, education, migration of course, and then the last one is about EU policy and legislation. So, we have this area where we think about what does Europe mean also for us as churches, as organizations, as institutions but all the other areas are more advocacy work. Therefore, I
-

think one can argue and really truthfully say that the 4 in this answer to your question 1 to 5 is correct and when you see also how we put human recourses in this work I think it's correct to say it's 4.

-
- 12 I: I would also know some general aspects about religious lobbying. Do you form alliances with other representatives of religious organizations? I know the [organization] is closely cooperating with COMECE but do you also cooperate with other organizations?
-
- 13 E4: So, it's true that COMECE is a main partner and also other Catholic organizations. We are also working closely with Eurodiaconia, the European platform of diaconical, Protestant organizations and of course there is also Caritas Europe and others. In the migration area you have CCME from our side and on the Catholic side you have other organizations working on the question of refugees and migration. On many levels we are working very closely together.
-
- 14 In the more broader religious field it's a little bit more vague and not so developed like with the Catholic Church, but there are for instance in the human rights area... I know that my colleague is very much working for instance with the Bahai who are very open for this kind of cooperation and we are looking also more and more for, let's say not cooperation but also exchange and then also cooperation with other religions. But you have to have in mind, and that's the same experience like in Germany, it's the same on the European area, for instance to find advocies and partners on the Muslim community is not easy because the structure or the way of organization is very different in that area.
-
- 15 You know perhaps that the European Commission, the president or the vice president of the Commission together with the president of the Council and of the Parliament are inviting once a year so called religious leaders in Europe ...
-
- 16 I: Ah, you mean the dialog with churches?
-
- 17 E4: No, that is something different. There are two levels. One is once a year, the presidents invite for the religious leaders meeting. There is also a press conference at the end. It is kind of a meeting for coming together and exchange. It is also a representative format, not so much a discussion or a work ... I don't know what would be the right word... it has also this representative aspect in a way. And then you have also this dialog meeting. But this dialog meetings are still more between CEC and COMECE and the European Commission on certain areas.
-
- 18 Another example would be, perhaps you have seen, we are also part of the European Sunday Alliance where also trade unions and others are members. So that is a very specific work. There also we are now more and more looking to get partners also in the Jewish and in the Muslim area but as I said that is not so easy, we have to develop it.
-
- 19 I: You said that religious representatives promote the common good as a goal. Would you say that they promote comparable contents or that they have a comparable vision about the common good in Europe?
-
- 20 E4: You mean all the religions coming there together?
-
- 21 I: Which make lobbying work in the EU.
-
- 22 E4: I mean I could try to answer to that but of course we have also to see to become not superficial there because I mean I think that there are certain points where we are very close to one another. The question for peace for instance or living together in a peaceful way and neighborhood. There is also the question of religious freedom for all religions in Europe but also beyond Europe. The question about how do the European Institutions promote religious freedom elsewhere in the world. There are all areas where I think the religious leaders, also in these meetings, when you look at the website, I think you can also find it on the Commission's website, there you will find reports on that. There also you will find that they address also these kinds of areas where you can say this is also something about the common good in Europe and for Europe.
-
- 23 I: There are also secular organizations doing philosophical lobbying in Europe. Do you also cooperate with them?
-
- 24 E4: From time to time yes because we have also meetings together. We are invited together, also in the European Parliament sometimes when it is about religious freedom, because the topic relates also to philosophical and non-confessional organizations. On the other hand, we have also to say that from time
-

to time there is a certain distance, because they have sometimes the feeling or observation that the Commission or the Parliament takes too much care about religion, also with this article 17, and they have a concept of secularized structures which are more related to the political concept or certain political concept in France and sometimes also in Belgium. There is also sometimes a certain distance I would say between them and an organization like [organization]. But there are points of meetings and conferences where is a certain exchange between these organizations.

-
- 25 I: Would you say that they also promote the common good in a way?
-
- 26 E4: I think from their perspective yes. I think we will have a certain, with some groups of them, we will have a certain concern or let's say debate and hot discussion about the concept of how the political sphere can relate and has to relate also to religion, church and so on, in their perspective and in our perspective.
-
- 27 I: That would be also my next question. What are the conflicts between secular organizations and religious organizations? You mentioned right now that secular organizations have a different opinion about secularity in the EU. Are there more thematical conflicts?
-
- 28 E4: I mean to put it a little bit differently, to make it really clear. I mean there is a certain tradition and culture to say that religion is a private issue and it has to be a private issue and it has not to play a role in the public sphere, in the political sphere. To make a very clear distinction and separation between these two areas. I think we, the churches and religions, would phrase it in a different way. From the Christian perspective, I would say also the Catholic church would agree on that, we say of course there should be and must be a clear distinction between the political and the religious or church area which does not mean that there aren't discussions, and necessary discussions and exchanges between these fields. This is needed. Like we have it in Germany and other countries. I think in this question of conceptualization there is a clear difference between Humanist's and also Freemason's point of views and the point of views of churches and religions.
-
- 29 On other matters, directly, I'm not sure if one could, what could be a point of view where we are totally different. Do you have something in mind, yourself, what you are thinking?
-
- 30 I: I was wondering about thematic fields. For example, bioethics or family policy were fields other representatives mentioned.
-
- 31 E4: Ahja. That's interesting because I would say from my point of view 'no'. I also had in mind this bioethics and family issues but I mean seriously and honestly and openly spoken: if you look into the Protestant world - and I'm very much deep into this world and I know a little bit about that - if you go to the question of Euthanasia for instance and if you go into the area of reproductive medicine you will have in the Protestant world, I do not speak now about the Orthodox and Catholic, but in the Protestant world you will still have all kind of different answers to ethical questions and family issues. As you know in Germany and also in other churches now you have the blessing of homosexual partnerships. I think one could not say that for all churches and religions there is a clear cut and division to philosophical or non-confessional approaches on this kind of questions.
-
- 32 I: But among the churches or among the different religions or denominations, are there these kinds of conflicts?
-
- 33 E4: Well, you know the problem is that - you have a lot of problems about that, that's true - but it's going somehow through the churches. Inside of the churches you have this kind of discussions, even in the Orthodox churches and also in the Catholic Church. I mean even the Pope has done a slightly different wording about homosexual partners some month ago and of course there was a broad debate than in the Catholic Church. Inside of the church you have a different understanding. That is also true for the Protestant churches. You cannot point out to one church and say "They are of this opinion or that opinion on that issue, it's totally clear". No, there is a certain division and ongoing discussion of this kind of issues inside of the churches. The Protestant are somehow of the most.. yeah .. advanced ones to some extant but also there... Here in Belgium for the moment, you have a hot debate inside of the church. It's a very small and tiny church but they really have a hot debate on this issue. Division is perhaps not the right word but you have a debate inside of the churches. Does it help?
-
- 34 I: Yes, definitely. So you mentioned that the EU is cooperating especially with CEC and with COMECE and sometimes for example secular organizations are complaining. Do you also have the impression that
-

the EU prefers to represent the interest of religious people in Europe on the disadvantage of non-religious people?

-
- 35 E4: No, not at all. I mean first of all it is still that, for our perception and I think if you go to lawyers who know something about European institutions, I think they would underline this, too. The whole concept of the European institutions, how they work, from the history also, it is very much driven by the French culture. It is very clear that religion and church from the start is more the private sector. I mean also the article 17 was the first time in the history of the treaties where churches and religions have been even mentioned. So there is a certain development
-
- 36 but I mean the whole issue of religion now, I think it comes really up because of the... how to phrase it now in a correct way... of the Ratlosigkeit... the discussion about how do we integrate in our societies and in Europe the Islam and Muslim communities in the right way. All countries have certain problems there, like France, like Germany, and others. Of course, because of all the attacks which had a certain Islamist terrorist background. Of course, it's not the Islam, but the people are related to a certain Islamic background. Of course, there is the question now more coming up in the institutions, how do we deal with this kind of phenomenon?
-
- 37 But I think it would be not true, or not the right perspective to say that the institutions care a lot about churches and religions and about non-religions the do not care. I mean you have to see that in the center of the EU is still the internal market and the free movement of people, the free movement of goods, the free movement of money. That is what the EU is very much about. That is not about religions and churches and so on.
-
- 38 I: Ok. But do you think there is an identity in the EU? Something European citizens refer to?
-
- 39 E4: Yes I mean, but that are two different things. I personally think and that is also where we as [organization] relate to: There is a certain European identity if you take the treaty, it is a little bit like Habermas argues in Germany and the constitution, if you take article 2 of the treaty, we argue in [organization] that is something what is the identity in the EU because it is about the fundamental values. I have it not open, but it is about human rights, liberties, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and so on. That together with the Charter of Human Rights is something where you can say Europe should be about, it is based on and what is also somehow the identity of Europe in which we live. But if you ask now if the European citizens relate to that... I mean ask them. I'm not so sure if for the moment many people in Europe have the feeling that they relate to this kind of fundament, if they look to the EU, or?
-
- 40 I: Sorry, did you say they have or they don't have?
-
- 41 E4: I mean do you have the impression if you ask a European citizens, I mean not now living in Brussels and working for the EU institutions, if you ask a so called 'normal' European citizens, he would answer with the article 2?
-
- 42 I: That's funny that you ask me this, because I had the chance to make a research trip traveling through Europe 4 weeks just asking all the people on my way exactly this question.
-
- 43 E4: Aha. And?
-
- 44 I: I had the impression it depends on the country. I was traveling through Spain, Romania, and the Netherlands. In Romania I had the impression that people very much identify with the EU, also in the Netherlands. In Spain I had the impression the EU was much more known for economic interest and the crisis... But sometimes I think there is more identification than one would suggest.
-
- 45 E4: I think it's really true, I think that this experience is very true also from our perception and what we know from our churches, our member churches, that it really also depends where you go in Europe and this is very different in the countries.
-
- 46 I: Would you say it is a goal from the [organization] to contribute to the EU identity?
-
- 47 E4: Yes, I mean if you look on our website you will find we have written what we called an open letter to our churches about the future for Europe. We say Europe is really in a deep deep crisis. A crisis like never before which is really dramatic and we do not know how this will end this story and we are asking about what our churches have in mind speaking about Europe and what we think Europe should be and
-

we invite for a discussion and make also now a process. We have 3 or 4 regional conferences in Northern, Central, and Southern Europe with our member churches coming together and to discuss on this. It will than lead to our assembly in June 2018 in Novi Sad in Serbia, where especially this will be the main topic. What is the future for Europe? What do we as churches see and define and determine the future for Europe and how do we also contribute to this. Yeah, absolutely.

-
- 48 I: You mentioned in the beginning that religions or religious institutions had a leading role in the European integration from its early beginning. Do you think religions can contribute to the emergence of a common identity?
-
- 49 E4: Sorry, just to correct me, perhaps I've put it wrong. I did not want to say in the beginning that we had a leading role there. I just wanted to say that from the beginning we were in favor of this political process and would like to support it.
-
- 50 I: Oh yes, I'm sorry.
-
- 51 E4: No, but it would be much too much to say that we had a leading role. We had definitely not. But we were from the beginning in favor and tried to support it. I mean if you take such an organization like [organization]. [Organization] is a typical example of Europe because there is a huge variety in [organization]. You have Orthodox churches coming from a very different tradition than Protestant churches. You have this big big churches like the church of Sweden or the Protestant church of Germany. You have tiny, little, small churches like the church in Belgium or the Protestant church in Greece. It's a very European organization because it is so different and it is not always very easy to work for [organization] and in [organization] because of this diversity. But while working on this diversity - because we think we have to do this and because we want to share our opinions and our faith so on - we are doing somehow what Europe is about. You can say people who are involved and related to the process of what [organization] is about, you build also in a certain way a European identity, or?
-
- 52 I: Ok. Finally, those were all the questions I had? Do you have something in mind I did not mention or what you would like to mention?
-
- 53 E4: No. I'm quite happy that I had a little bit of answers to all these difficult questions. No, I'm pretty fine. I'm sure later, If you ask me tomorrow morning, I will have plenty of things to say, but, no, not now.
-